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MICHAEL OWEN'S WLS '99 • S.C.A.R.S (MULTIPLAYER) • SHADOW GUNNER

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GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

Baywatch babe Marliece Andrada has a hot sticky night on the rep–tiles!

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Feb 1999

Volume 1 Issue 5

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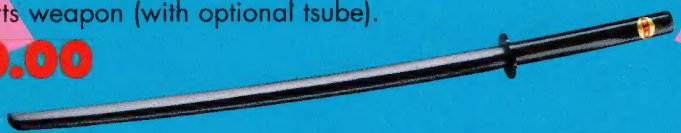

Lesson one: kick the living daylights out of the other guy before he kicks it out of you. **ボクシング・グローブ**

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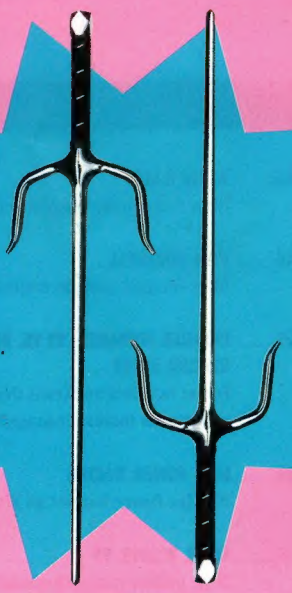

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Lesson two: there is no lesson two. ヌンチャク This isn't the local grammar.

Fail, and you might be off games for a while. 短刀斧 ヌンチャク

RIVAL SCHOOLS UNITED BY FATE

PlayStation

We're sorry about Gran Turismo!

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PLAYED AND RATED

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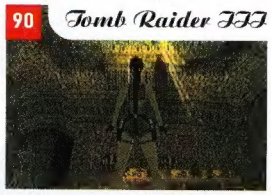

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Make sure you're getting the best deal that's out there.

Another Month, Another Disc!

STATION 5

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?

You'd better be, because once again we've persuaded, pushed, pulled and put together another crackling selection of demos that should have you salivating like never before.

First, it's the exclusive first look at the lizard everyone loves, Gex, in his latest madcap platformer, *Deep Cover Gecko*. After that you can sit down and get your hands on playable treats like *Max Power Racing*, *Player Manager Season 98-99*, *Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99*, *S.C.A.R.S* and finally, *Shadow Gunner*.

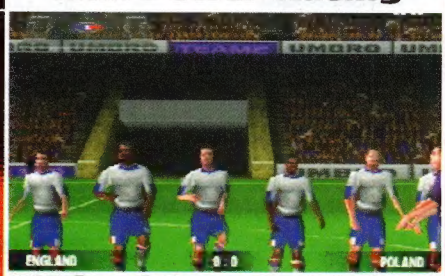
And after that little list we're entitled to ask, what more could you possibly want? Apart from getting the same top-class deal next month. Which you will.

GEX: Deep Cover Gecko

Max Power Racing

S.C.A.R.S

GEX: Deep Cover Gecko



Michael Owen's WLS '99

Shadow Gunner

Player Manager 98-99

Max Power Racing

DISC BREAKDOWN

GEX: Deep Cover Gecko

This is it, our exclusive rolling demo of the third installment of the Gex trilogy. Here's your chance to preview the state of play at the moment for what is sure to be one of 1999s biggest selling games. Sit back and enjoy as the lizard performs all of his usual antics in a brand new adventure. Gex 3 promises to be the best yet, with redesigned graphics and cover babe Marliece Andrada replacing Leslie Phillips as the gecko's mentor. Check it out with STATION.

Max Power Racing

Well, you can forget about your fancy Ferraris and Porsches here – this is all about street racing. In our fantastic dual demo you can test your skills by racing a nice looking and powerful Toyota Supra around what looks like the desert canyons of Arizona in the good ol' US of A. If all that is just a bit too much pressure for you, you can also sit back, sip a cup of tea and enjoy the sights and sounds of Monaco in our rolling demo. The choice, as they say, is yours!

Player Manager Season 98-99

Now this is the kind of demo we like to give away. Just so you can see exactly what this in-depth game has to offer you, you can choose to be the manager of any team (from any of the four divisions) that takes your fancy and then take charge of them for the first ten weeks of the season to see how much success you can bring. There's a serious amount of playing time involved here, so don't make any plans once you load this up.

Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99

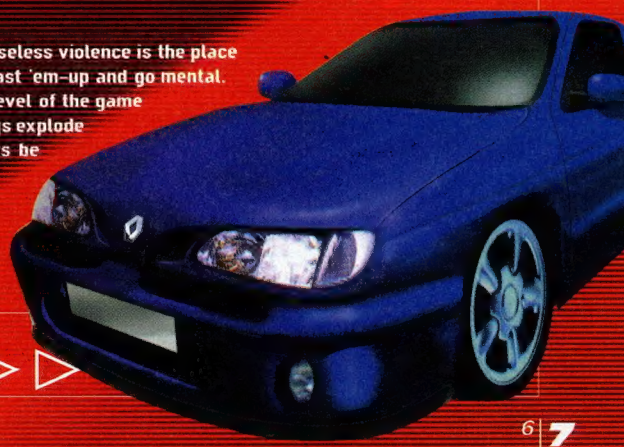
A testing and teasing introduction into Michael Owen's world of football as England face up to those perennial tough challengers, Poland. Now, you can choose to be any one of the two teams you like, but remember that you've only got the first half in which to prove your dominance, and with a complicated set of controls that take a little bit of getting used to, this is one game you're going to have to practice with before victory will be yours.

S.C.A.R.S

Welcome to our exclusive four-player demo of this madcap futuristic battle-racing game. Yep, from one to four players at the same time. The idea, of course, is simple. Race around the Rally course and attempt to speed past your opponents. If that fails, you can always pick up the various weapons and power-ups that litter the course and then use them wisely on anyone that takes your fancy – of course, it's always a bit more fun if it's a fellow human being.

Shadow Gunner

When life has taken its toll and you feel there's no way out, senseless violence is the place you want to go. Alternatively, you can just load up this little blast 'em-up and go mental. There's nothing too complicated to deal with here, it's the first level of the game and your mission is destroy everything you can find. The buildings explode very nicely, but the other robots tend to fight back, so always be ready for action and keep an eye on your back.



Turn to page 128 to find out how to get the most out of your exclusive cover CD.

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FORMULA game development

PROJECT TWO INTERACTIVE

BLACK FRIAR

PlayStation

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I'VE CONQUERED WORLDS IN A DAY

With Sony shifting more than 120,000 PlayStations in the final full week leading up to Christmas, we're in for yet another year of videogaming dominated by PlayStation software. I hope that there are some first time STATION buyers new to the world of videogaming reading this. Welcome to you all, took your time didn't you?

The post Christmas months usually denote a slump in top quality software, with companies waiting until the Easter high point to release their next batch of titles. Although there are still elements of this attitude around us this year, the February/March line up isn't quite as dire as usual. Let's face it, with an installed base of 8 million in Europe (3.5 million in the UK alone), any time is a good time to get a game on the shelves.

Turning the traditional tide upon its head is Konami, who plan to release what could be its strongest title to date, and will almost certainly be the biggest selling game of '99. Other titles making their debut in this period include Gremlin's sequel to its highest selling title of '98, *Kevin Keegan's Premier Manager '99*. Their first PlayStation management title, *Premier Manager '98*, was the third biggest seller overall last year, and it seems that they are confident they can realise the same success, and more, regardless of the temporal season.

Sony have achieved their dream of creating a console with massive appeal to both punters and producers alike. We've seen our Nintendo brethren left craving for months at a time, waiting for the latest monster sanctioned by their holy masters to hit the shelves. Sony, however, by allowing a freer reign to developers, are now seeing Triple A titles enter our homes every single month. Sometimes, quantity *is* better than quality, because it's all part of the learning curve. It's down to the experience of so many small developers that third and fourth generation PSX games are still easily holding their own against the theoretically better N64 offerings. In a couple of years will we be able to say the same when PSX2 and Dreamcast have devoured Nintendo's market? I think not.

And what of those Triple A titles? Well, featured in this issue are two that just missed out, the superb *Premier Manager '99*, and the import only *Ridge Racer 4*. Surprise favourite in the office was *Tiger Woods '99*, possibly the first golf game ever to score so highly. Some other exciting titles are featured exclusively on our cover disc, including *Player Manager Season 98-99* and the soon-to-be-Triple A, *Gex: Deep Cover Gecko*. There's also an extremely playable multiplayer demo of *S.C.A.R.S.*

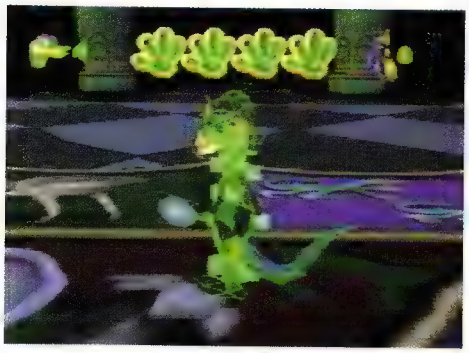
And more to come in March, but we can't say too much just yet... Perhaps our catch line should read STATION... the most generous PlayStation magazine in the world! Perhaps it will.

Darren Herridge – Editor

In Gexcelsis Deo

GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

As another year gets itself firmly underway, STATION gets off to a good start by securing this exclusive first look, feel and play of what is shaping up to be not only an essential fix of fun for platform fanatics, but also one of the best games you'll ever play. Interested? Of course you are.



BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: There are plenty of new levels and costumes for the experienced and uninitiated alike to explore and dress up in. Here's a selection that speak for themselves really. Here we have the Sherlock Holmes outfit. Still looks like a gecko underneath though; the obligatory snow and ice level will have you slipping and sliding around all over the place, but also admiring the scenery; a smug looking gecko has found the treasure. Hope he's strong enough to carry the chest, 'cause he ain't got no pockets.

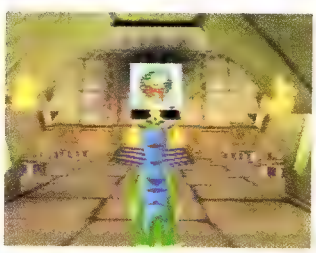
It's definitely a funny old life, don't you think? Take the world of videogames for instance. We play loads of them, both week in and week out. We cross-examine all the different people involved in the process of making them and getting them onto the streets. It's all done so that we can bring our readers a fair comparison of the latest releases and objective opinions about work in the pipeline. So, all in all, you would think that by this stage in the PlayStation's lifetime we'd be able to suss out the good and the bad long before we have to sit down and play it, that there is little of wonder left to take us unawares. But you'd be wrong. Thankfully, as that would make our lives very dull, we're still constantly surprised by what ideas and tricks programmers come up with these days – everything from graphics and gameplay to voiceovers and music.

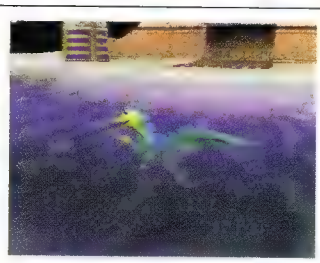
One of the characters we have been most impressed with is the star of Gex: Deep Cover Gecko. At this stage, it looks like Gex 3 may well be one of the most playable games we've ever laid our hands on. It's a world full of surprises, so bets must be hedged, but we think it has great potential.

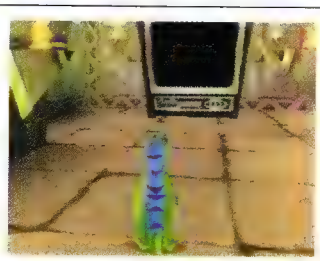
Why so cagey? Well, there's plenty of variables in games at their early stages that either go wrong or don't make it to the final code. An example of this would be the control system. At the moment, when playing Deep Cover Gecko, it's very easy to fall off edges and plummet to your doom, but this kind of thing is usually on the 'last refinements' list. Right now it's a case of watching every step, and trusting that it will be improved for the final release.

➜

"THE NUMBER OF COSTUMES WOULD MAKE MR BEN'S TAILOR SHUT UP SHOP AND CONSIDER A CAREER CHANGE"







MARLIECE ANDRADA

The *Baywatch* (and Playboy) star hand picked to play opposite Gex in this latest episode is one of the lesser known cohorts of Yasmine Bleeth and the ever popular Pammy Anderson. STATION just had to investigate...

For those of you that aren't familiar with the Baywatch star in Gex: Deep Cover Gecko, we've compiled a few interesting facts about her and made it our duty to discover all those curious details such as alleged nude pier jumping in the early hours of the morning and things that turn her on. Because you need to know. Oh yes you do.

Andrada plays the 'earth mother' Skylar Bergman in Baywatch and has shot to global fame after being featured on the cover of an early 1998 issue of Playboy. Formerly a cheerleader for American Football team the Oakland Raiders, in 1995 she was picked out by the TV networks as the most 'photogenic' pom-pom shaker of the season. Since then she went on to do some hideously dodgy television series called Arlis and, as if by magic, appeared on Baywatch as a mermaid. Odd. Clearly obsessed with being seen on TV, as soon as she graduated from university she headed to Hollywood to be seen on screen and er, in print as it eventually transpired. For those of you still salivating over our the pier jumping story, it happened on San Clemente pier at two 'o clock in the morning and ended with the police waiting to question her on the shore.

The seemingly outrageous half Swedish half Portugese star comes from a large family of four sisters and three brothers. Her inclusion in Gex is questionable to say the least, but she makes cameo appearances in video footage during the game as well as flexing her vocal tones here and there.

MARLIECE ANDRADA: JUST THE FACTS MA'AM

BUST SIZE: 35D

WAIST SIZE: 24

HIP SIZE: 35

HEIGHT: 5'7"

WEIGHT: 8 STONE 6 LBS

BIRTH DATE: 22.8.72

BIRTH PLACE: Manteca, California

AMBITIONS: 'To continue to develop my career, always growing and always contributing to the art.'

TURN ONS: 'Mystery. I love getting to know a man and discovering all the nuances that make him special.'

TURN OFFS: 'Bad breath, bad jokes and being hit on at the gym. A girl's gotta sweat in peace!'

MOST REMEMBERED BAYWATCH MOMENT: 'The day I was chosen, and getting my lip split open during an on screen rescue. Ouch!'

WHAT ABOUT GEX THEN, ER SEX WE MEAN: 'Attitude! Any woman, no matter what size or shape, can be sexy if she believes she is.'

HOW CAN SOMEONE PULL YOU?: 'Be honest. Be easy going. And I'm a vegetarian, so an authentic, vegetarian Italian meal made by my man wouldn't hurt!'

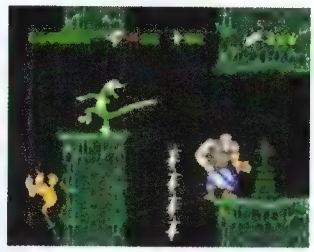
So you don't eat meat, then?...

GEX HISTORY

GEX – 1993

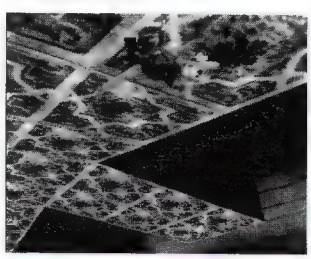
The original Gex was ported from the CD based 3DO console that was heavily supported by Crystal Dynamics but failed due to its hefty price tag. Billed as the definitive next generation platformer, the game remained 2D like earlier Mario and Sonic adventures but relied on it's fluid animation and CD sound enhancements to gain fame. An early attempt for Crystal Dynamics with a machine that wasn't a truly next generation system, despite being 32Bit.

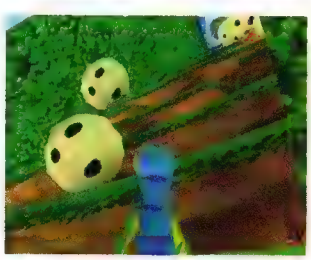
It was ported to the PlayStation as a matter of course – many Crystal games were converted purely for the fact that the sales on the 3DO had been low, largely because only a few financially blessed gamers bought the £399 machine.

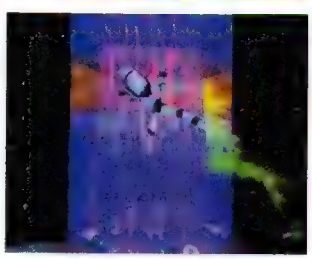


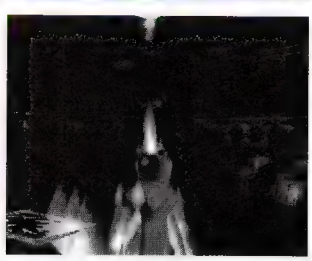
GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO – APRIL 1997

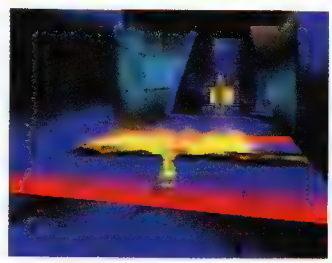
Gex's first 3D outing was undoubtedly the best platforming game on the PlayStation at the time. The smooth 3D and high production values ensured that when it was released it became the closest thing the PlayStation had to Mario. The humourously TV themed levels included Hammer Horror mansions, *Jurassic Park* ranges and *Star Wars* inspired intergalactic battles. The more mature themed comical exploits were aided by voiceovers from oh-so-hilarious Carry On stalwart Leslie Phillips for the UK version and US comedian Dana Gould for the American release. All in all, Gex 3D shoved Crystal Dynamics back into the Triple A league of developers and made the green gecko a damn sight more popular too.



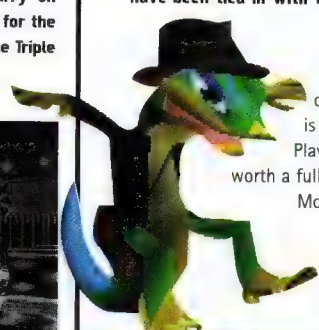








BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: Something looks very unstable about the flooring in this room; like all good platformers, there are hints and tips to help you on your quest. Naturally these have been tied in with the TV theme.



GEX IS BACK!

So there's the caveat, our get-out clause if you like. So let's lay our well provisioned cards on the table. Gex: Deep Cover Gecko is looking like a contender for the best platform game ever on the PlayStation. So good, in fact, that we think the little green fella is worth a full feature to strut his stuff in.

Most of you will be well aware of the pedigree for this game, and for those who aren't we've provided a brief history, Over on the left. The first thing that needs to be said is that this third installment will not be as dramatically different from the previous outing as *Gex 3D* was from the original. However,

ABOVE: A cunning disguise, which will probably only work in the period circa 400 BC. Of course, that's the magic of television.

BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: No time to stand around admiring the scenery here, there's mission objectives to be achieved; now there's a topical pun, hopefully lost on the youngsters. Smoking may be bad for your health, but cigars don't have to be put in the mouth.

THE INTERNATIONAL GECKO SOCIETY

OK, so it's not exactly related to the goings on in the game, but we thought you might like to know a little bit of information about real-life geckoes. And what better place to start than with the charmingly titled International Gecko Society.

They really know what they're talking about, and provide a worldwide community atmosphere for every one who loves geckoes. If you do, you're know as a Gecknid, a bit like being a Trekkie if you like *Star Trek*.

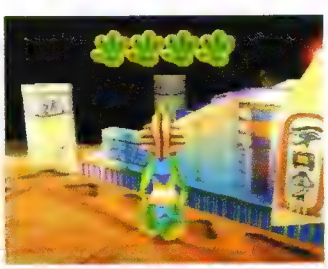
Anyway, we logged onto their, and quite a few other, web sites to learn about the different varieties and how to look after your gecko properly. Hell, we're so interested now that we wanted to go to Gecko Night, but that was in August 1998. Still, maybe we'll make it in 1999.

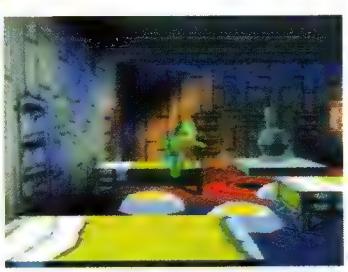
If you'd like to know more, and you've got access to the World Wide Web, then we highly recommend you check out their site at www.igs.com. Failing that, find the quiet bloke with greasy hair at work who keeps them as pets and talk to him, after all, no one else will.

Dictionary definition: gecko /gekko/ n. (pl –os or –oes) any of the various house lizards found in warm climates, with adhesive feet for climbing vertical surfaces.

the people at Crystal Dynamics aren't ones to rest on their laurels and merely shove a kind of platform update onto the public. Already, the depth of redesign and overhaul is apparent.

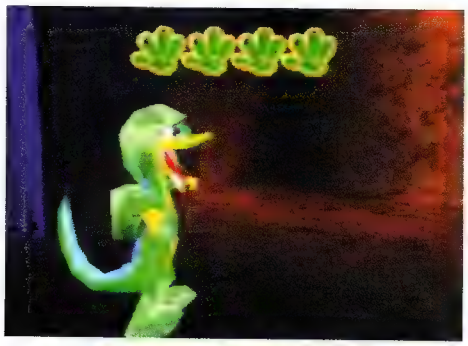
Yes, the roam around 3D style of *Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko*, is still the basis of the game engine, but time has moved on a bit since then and so has programming skill. The little details are much improved (from convincing cityscapes to 'humourous' posters stuck up on walls) and the camera swings around, whether under your control or the CPUs, with greater ease and ➜

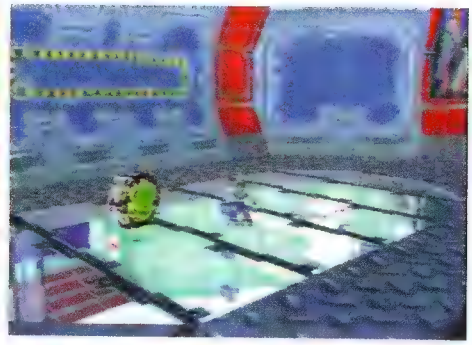


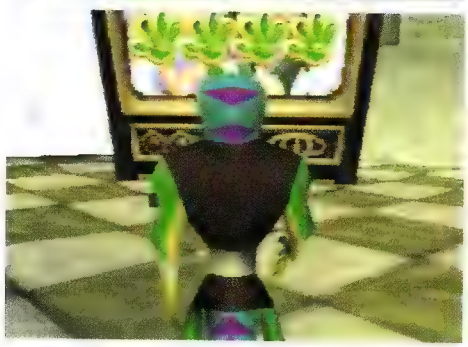


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: That's either a very elegant and highly original chimney stack, or else some other green thing out for the glory; smell something burning? Never fear, Gex will save the day; the headdress fortunately doesn't impare peripheral vision; time out of TV land to visit fairy tale? Three bears territory or what?

"THE INGENUITY AND CREATIVITY OF THE PROGRAMMERS IS BORNE OUT IN THE SHEER NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LANDSCAPES AND TERRAINS THAT THEY'VE CREATED"





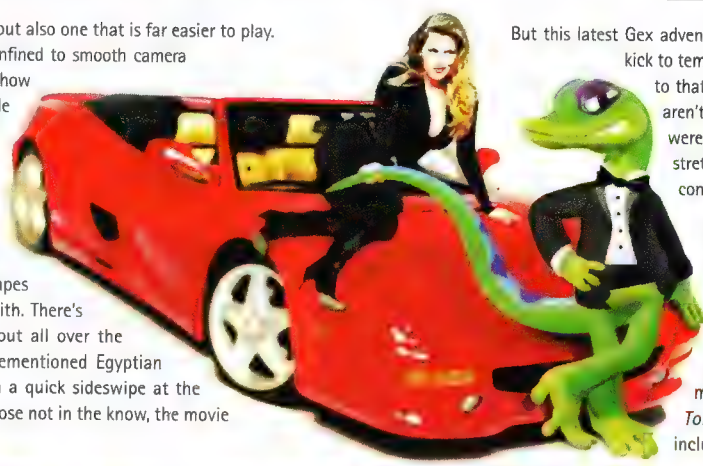


BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: **The world is full of choices to be made, and Gex performs them with the help of various remote controls. The downside is that it may affect your eyesight; the worlds are littered with humourous signs which sometimes assist you in the gameplay, and sometimes just offer helpful lifestyle tips. I think this is one of the former; stop press, pink gecko afraid of own reflection.**

"GEX 3 MAY WELL BE ONE OF THE MOST PLAYABLE GAMES WE'VE EVER LAID OUR HANDS ON"

fluidity, making not only for a more enjoyable game but also one that is far easier to play. Even better is that the graphical treats aren't just confined to smooth camera movement and jokey posters – the game shows off just how much imagination has gone into it at every available opportunity. It's difficult to describe without giving too much away, but there are features like wobbly platforms that tilt relative to the position of Gex standing on them and, in the Egyptian area, walls which come to life (it looks better than it sounds).

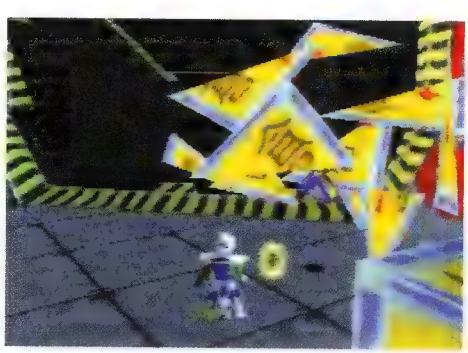
The ingenuity and creativity of the programmers is borne out in the sheer number of different landscapes and terrains that they've created for you to cope with. There's the obligatory snow/ice world where you slide about all over the place, but more interestingly there's also the aforementioned Egyptian levels that are spectacular in atmosphere and even a quick sideswipe at the *Jaws* movies with a level set in Scamity Island. For those not in the know, the movie was set in a place called Amity Island.

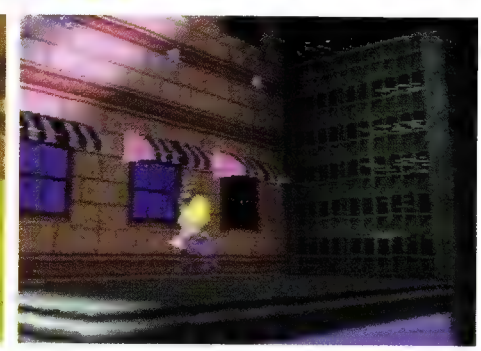


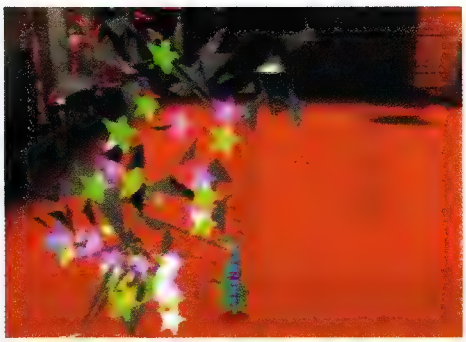
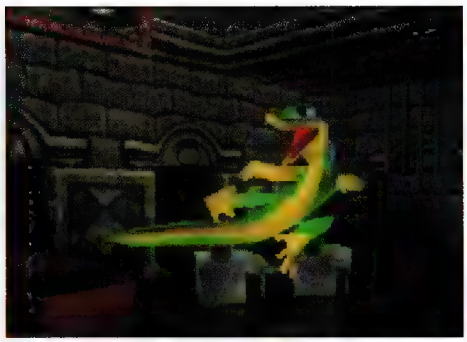
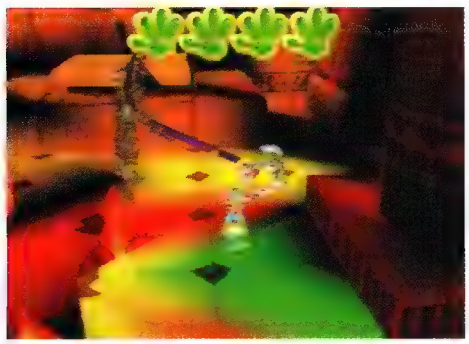
But this latest Gex adventure offers more than just a new visual kick to tempt you to enter its world. Respect is paid to that old saying about not fixing things that aren't broken, but where gameplay boundaries were pushed before, they have now been stretched to the limit. All aspects have been considered in preparing this sequel.

MASSIVE ATTACK

For starters, the game is absolutely massive. There are so many games out there boasting so many sections, that the size of levels, in terms of playing through them, has kind of lost meaning and power to impress. The *Tomb Raider* series is considered to include the biggest games around at the





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: So what turns a gecko's head? Either Marliece Andrada, or a vibrant display of shooting stars; whoa. I feel good and Gex probably new that he would – just look at that grin and what he doing with that lower foot;and every level has its boss, like every rose has its thorn etc. Although a lot of the game is still very raw, the characters are already taking their final shapes.

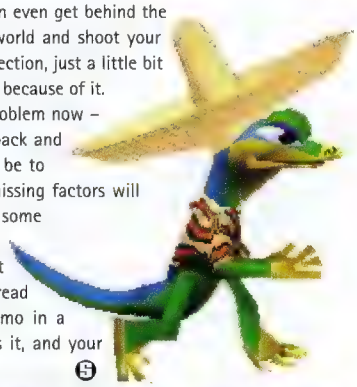
moment and while we can't tell from this early code whether or not Gex will actually topple Croft, Deep Cover Gecko is definitely not going to be too far behind in the race.

And to add to the enormous levels the game exploits the character of Gex by having him don new disguises and involve himself in both self-parody and mimicry of popular culture. The list of ensemble the lizard has to wear would make Mr Ben's tailor shut up shop and consider a career change – it's too long to document here, but it does include delights such as Sherlock Holmes and an amusing Japanese Anime character. And none of these are just pointless whims of artists with too much time on their hands – thanks to the detail put into each level, Gex complements his surroundings perfectly. It all gives an extra little kick of incentive to the player who might be getting bored.

But we're not finished there, oh no. The final touch to perfect the gameplay and offer a bit more than your usual, or even unusual, platform game is the parade of vehicles that Gex pilots on his adventure. We made a very big point of these in last issue's Unfinished Business section but the fun to be had from doing things as diverse as snowboarding and tank driving in the same game cannot be overstated. It's a riot!

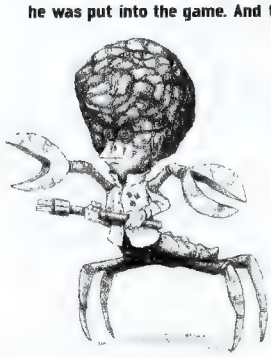
And if that's not enough for you, you can even get behind the trigger of a gun in the spaghetti western world and shoot your enemies. It isn't a full blown shoot 'em-up section, just a little bit of diversity and the game is much better off because of it.

So where now? Well, time is the only problem now – for us, not the game. All we can do is sit back and wait for everything we hope the game will be to happen. We're fairly positive that all the missing factors will happen: tweaks to the control system and some graphical glitches with the 3D stuff but you're going to have to wait a little bit longer than us. You'll have to wait until you read about it and get to play the exclusive demo in a forthcoming issue of STATION in fact. Miss it, and your PlayStation will never forgive you.



WITH ENEMIES LIKE THESE...

With the amount of design and imagination that's gone into the game you could quite easily bypass the detail that's been put into the enemies (for want of a better word) that Gex combats throughout. And to give you a special little insight into the world of designers, we've managed to get hold of some early sketches and then put them up against the final look of the characters. This has very little to do with playing the game, but when you're sat there with your friend you'll be able to get out your copy of STATION and show him the drawing of a particular character before he was put into the game. And this will impress him, oh yes it will.



STATION NATION

A lot of you have written to us here at STATION. Most asking for a page like this.

Putting The Excitement Back Into PlayStation

At last! There's finally an adult PlayStation mag that doesn't make me cringe with embarrassment as I read it on the train in the morning. I find the features very interesting and the mag always looks very stylish. I'm surprised that there hasn't been another mag with a free disc on before now, it seems like such an obvious idea. The official magazine is good, but it's so bland and dull that it takes all the excitement out of videogames. Thanks for a good couple of issues and you've got yourself one regular reader.

• TIM SLADE, SHROPSHIRE.

Another Satisfied Customer

At last! It's refreshing to see that someone has got the balls to come out and challenge OPM man to man, or mag to mag anyway. I had been growing bored with the increasing aloofness their mag showed and the staid, clinical feel which permeated the design and the writing. When I saw STATION nestled in my local supermarket I had to try it and found it to be a breath of fresh air – my subscription's in the post. The Kung-Fu and Censorship features in particular have been superb – well informed, insightful and funny.

Arse-licking over with, I'll move onto more serious matters.

As a long-term PlayStation owner, I'm concerned that after *Tekken 3* and *Gran Turismo*, the machine can only go downhill. The N64 on the other hand is constantly improving, with games like *Zelda*, *Turok 2* and *Wipeout 64* significantly improving over their nearest PlayStation rivals. With Dreamcast on the way and still no official news on PlayStation 2, apart from backwards compatibility being unlikely, could it be that Sony are near the end of their short-lived but illustrious videogame reign?

Anyway, I wish you luck in the future. Keep providing those great demos and let's have some more pages in STATION soon. Good luck to Darren by the way, I hope he upholds the high standard that Dave Perry imprinted on the magazine in its early life!

• CHRISTOPHER MOUNT, SHEFFIELD.

STATION!

Hey, dudes,

Your mag rocks! It's like totally excellent, man! Cool games, hot pix and all the latest news AND a free CD - there is nothing you cannot do! Shame about the bogus name, huh?

• BILL BOGUS, SAN DIMAS.

Joy In Repetition

I've just read issue 3 of your magazine and it's every bit as good as the first two, but I've got a question for you. It seems like every big game out there has a number at the end of the title. There's *Crash Bandicoot 3*, *TOCA 2*, *Tomb Raider III*, *Tekken 3*, *CoolBoarders 3* and that's just for starters. Is the PlayStation community running out of imagination, or just playing it safe with money that's as good as in the bank?

Don't think the games buying public haven't noticed.

• JERRY WADE, WESTON SUPER MARE.

Save Our STATION

You don't know me, but I've read every issue of your magazine. I've just got one question to ask: since you guys obviously spend a lot of time making your mag look so good, how about putting out some sort of binder so that regular readers like me can keep all our copies in top condition. I'd be willing to pay a fiver for a really nice one.

• LEE STEELBY, READING.

Sony 2 Madness

Sony would be mad if they made the PlayStation 2 non-backwards compatible, wouldn't they? I mean, I've seen the Dreamcast running and it does look very good indeed. Either the PlayStation 2 will have to be amazing to beat it, or it'll need a huge number of games you can play straight away. With so many class games out there already for the PlayStation, Sony would be crazy to expect their customers just to throw them all away! I want to be able to play *Gran Turismo* and *Tekken 3* even after I've had to sell my PlayStation to get the new one, and I'm sure that many other gamesplayers want to too.

• PETER CALDWELL, NEWMARKET.

Even more Sony 2 madness

First off, let me thank you for brightening up my gaming life with what has quickly become my favourite PlayStation magazine. It's good to see an unofficial magazine with a disc going up against the Official. I feel I can trust your reviews more than that other disc toting publication. Besides, you're not half full of adverts either.

I have got a point to make other than just how good your magazine is though, and I'm sure you'll agree with me on this: PlayStation 2, who gives a toss?! That's right I may be sticking my neck out, and no doubt a few flames will be sent my way via your letters pages, but lets get it together shall we people? The PlayStation is still alive and kicking. Look at the current crop of top titles for proof: *Tomb Raider III* – exciting, in depth and graphically superb; *TOCA 2* – fast, fun and probably the best racing game ever; *Spyro The Dragon* – fun for all the family. Proof in the proverbial pudding then. So why are we worried about a console that surely won't hit these shores for over two years?

I've noticed that STATION keeps the PlayStation 2 articles to a bare minimum wisely refusing to take part in the idle speculation that other magazines readily publish, so I'm not having a go at you personally. All I want to say is that we should enjoy what we have now. We're bound to be astounded by the next batch of PlayStation games in 1999, so why bother worrying about PlayStation 2 yet?

Anyway, that's about it except to say keep up the good work and go easy on those PlayStation 2 articles, at least for a while.

• JOHN RIDGEWAY, WEST GLAMORGAN.

TO HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT ANY STATION OR GAMES RELATED SUBJECT SEND YOUR OPINIONS TO:

STATION MAGAZINE, 1 ROMAN COURT, 49 NEW NORTH ROAD, EXETER EX4 4EP
OR EMAIL THE EDITOR ON: DARREN@RAPIDE.CO.UK

FIRESTARTER

FIRESTARTER FIRESTARTER FIRESTARTER FIRESTARTER FIRESTARTER FIRESTARTER

Winter of Discontent

Winter of Discontent

Winter of Discontent

We gave you your letters page, now it's our turn to spout forth opinionated bullshit. Dave Perry's usual mix of general abusive and genuine insight brings a little heat to an otherwise chilly winter.

It's that time of year again. When the majority of games publishers, like fourteen year old schoolboys mounting their best friend's older sister for the first time, seem to have shot their collective bolts frustratingly early, leaving the nation's console owners sighing a dejected 'is that it?' in a kind of post-Christmas funk.

Maybe that's why just about every PlayStation magazine seems have run a 'me too' *Ridge Racer 4* cover over the past month or two. Whilst you could be forgiven for thinking, like me, that many of our smaller rivals, like PLAY and PLAYSTATION POWER, have been guilty of being a bit misguided in heaping so much attention to a game that, no matter how good, is only available on import, the truth of the matter is... there really is very little else out there right now on the PlayStation front.

...like fourteen year old schoolboys mounting their best friend's older sister for the first time...

It's always a bit of a shame that games publishers choose to hoard their really big titles for the run up to Christmas and then release them all at once in a flurry of marketing and PR activity, before slipping back into virtual hibernation for the rest of the winter months. You can understand them wanting to capitalise upon the consumer spending frenzy that ensues in the run up to Christmas, when product ignorant mums and dads blindly wield their credit cards in a desperate bid to ensure that Santa Claus brings the latest Triple A title for little Johnny on Christmas day. But what every company seems to overlook is that the post Christmas market is just as buoyant. If you think about it, there are always more console owners after Christmas than there are before it. Santa takes care of that. There are a lot of gift vouchers and unspent money gifts waiting to be lavished upon games for adopters old and new, so for a really big, shit-hot release prepared to wait just that little bit longer, there would almost certainly be the opportunity to completely clean up, rather than compete in the usual festive bottleneck.

Only one publisher has even come close to exploiting this potentially massive window in the seasonal games release schedules, and this is of course yet another reason why Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* is set to clean up so comprehensively during the next month. Forget the undeniable quality of the game, there is simply no competition.

Or maybe they are all just running scared.

FIRE IN TH

THE AVERAGE PERSON IN THE STREET WOULD HAVE TO BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING THAT PRINCE NASEEM IS THE GREATEST FEATHERWEIGHT BOXER IN THE WORLD. AS THE CURRENT WBO FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPION, HE IS ONLY ONE OF FOUR WORLD TITLE HOLDERS AT THIS NINE STONE WEIGHT. SO WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES HIM THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AS CHAMPION? STATION TALKS TO PRINCE NASEEM, THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING...

Prince Naseem Boxing

Publisher: Codemasters

Developer: In-House

Release Date: March

Game Type: Boxing Sim

PAL Percentage Complete 40%

You may love Prince Naseem or hate him, laugh at his strutting arrogance, or scoff at his ego-centric ramblings, but you will certainly have heard of him and know of his theatrical flamboyance. He is currently holder of the World Boxing Organisation's Featherweight crown, and says that he carries the flag for England, Yemen and all Arabic people. One thing is for sure, his greatest talent after boxing is self-publicity. Naseem certainly knows how to wave the banner for Prince Naseem. And why not? As the current holder of the WBO belt, this spunky Londoner is instantly hailed by many as the world's greatest ever featherweight – and he's lending a little of his charisma to Codemasters for the forthcoming Prince Naseem Boxing.

But just how did Naseem Hamed, battling for attention in a family of nine children, manage to get started in boxing?

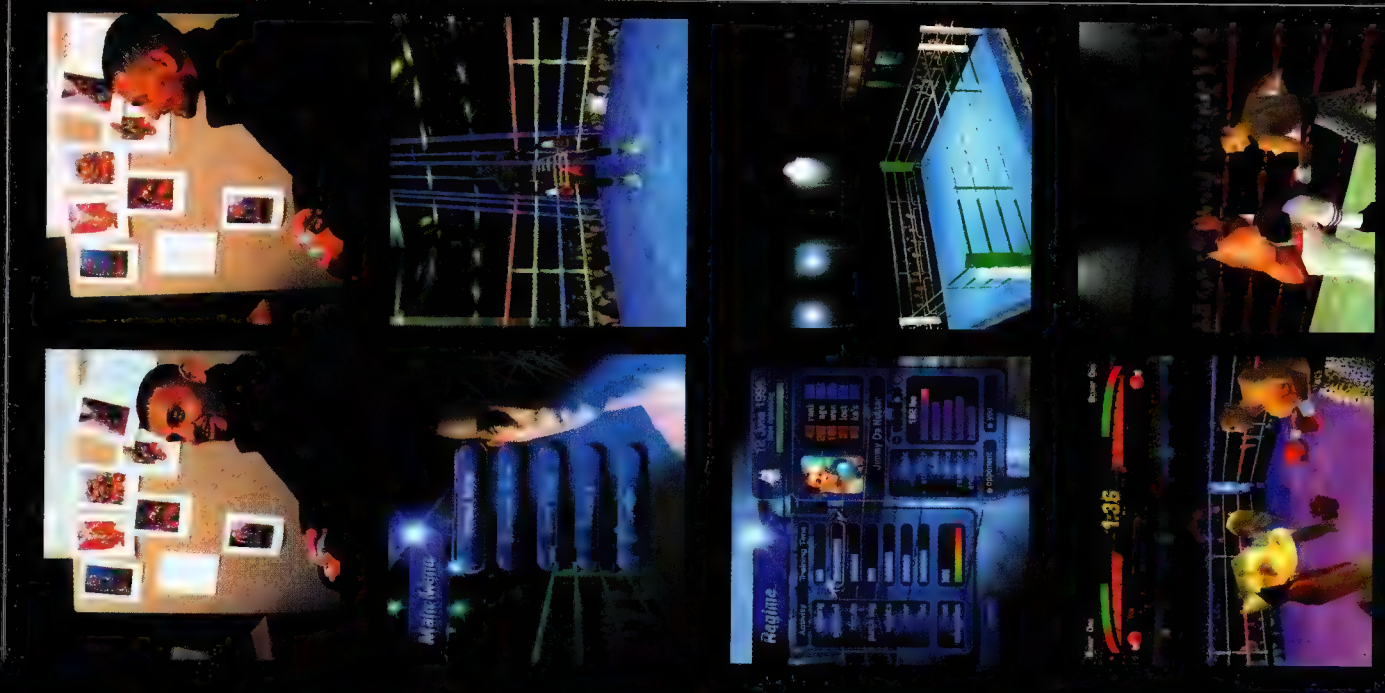
PRINCE NASEEM: **I was seven years old when I first stepped into the gym, mainly because of my dad. He'd already been taking my two older brothers Riath and Nabeel to a gym. They were both really into it – both enjoying the sport itself and possibly even being the centre of my dad's attention. I quickly decided that I wanted some of this action too.**

And action certainly he saw.. Even from those early days Naseem showed a single mindedness and strength of purpose that he has carried on to his professional life. Since deciding upon a career as a boxer, the Prince has remained undistracted by anything else.

PRINCE NASEEM: **I wasn't tempted to try to be good at football or basketball or any other sports. I knew that there was no choice for me. From the age of seven I've been boxing because I always knew that I would be World Champion.**

With his fearless attitude and small stature, he was perhaps driven harder than most people to try to excel and stand out from everyone else. Perhaps like many children from large families, Naseem felt that he had to try to bring himself to people's attention in some way. He certainly puts himself about a bit, but to his credit has never believed the violence needed to be taken out of the ring.

PRINCE NASEEM: **I always kept all of my fighting to the gym. Every day after school, I used to rush straight to the gym and train with weights, by sparring with the other lads**



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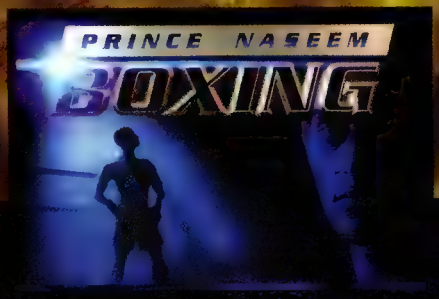
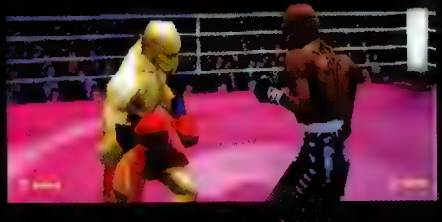


and by listening to those who had more experience than me. I remember that I always was fascinated by Mohammed Ali. He was an inspiration to me as a young boxer as he has been to a whole generation of fighters.

From his humble and innocuous beginnings, Naseem has now stepped out into a blinding world spotlight. He has confronted celebrity in the same style with which he faces an opponent, combining a showman's flair with an athlete's ability. →



CLEAN SHEET

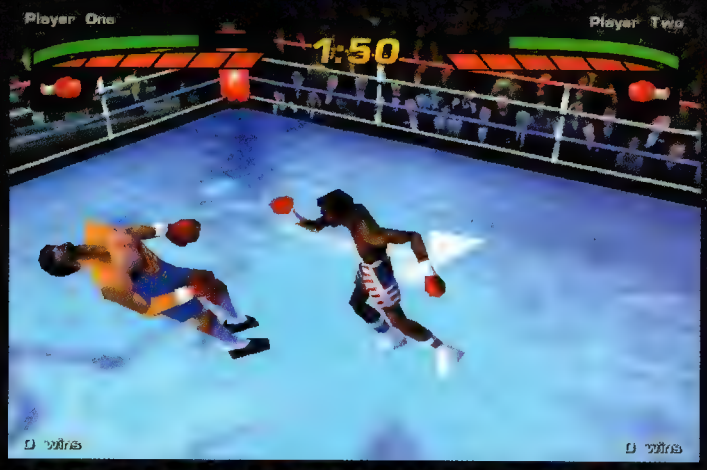
How do you get to be WBO Featherweight Champion of the World? It's easy – if you do it the Naseem way – just fight and win...

CAREER RECORD

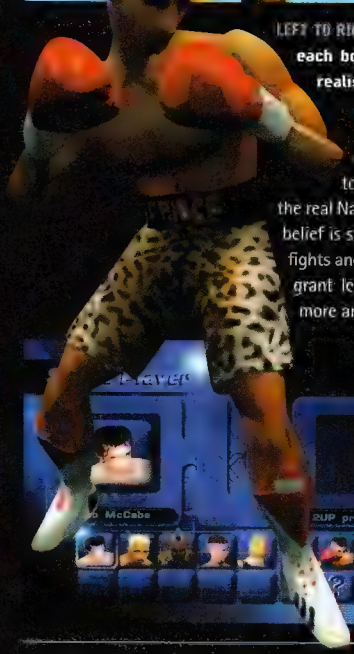
Five Times National Schoolboy Champion.
Twice Junior ABA Champion.
Former Undefeated Bantamweight Champion of Europe.
Former Undefeated WBC International Super-Bantamweight Champion.
Former Undefeated IBF Featherweight Champion of the World.

1992						
Apr. 14	Ricky Beard	Mansfield	W	KO	2	
Apr. 25	Shaun Norman	Manchester	W	TKO	2	
May 23	Andrew Bloomer	Birmingham	W	TKO	2	
July 14	Miguel Matthews	Mayfair	W	TKO	3	
Oct. 7	Des Gargano	Sunderland	W	TKO	4	
Nov. 12	Peter Buckley	Liverpool	W	PTS	6	
1993						
Feb. 24	Alan Ley	Wembley	W	KO	2	
May 26	Kevin Jenkins	Mansfield	W	TKO	3	
Sept. 24	Chris Clarkson	Dublin	W	KO	2	
1994						
Jan. 29	Peter Buckley	Cardiff	W	TKO	4	
Apr. 9	John Miceli	Mansfield	W	KO	1	
May 11	Vincenzo Belcastro	Sheffield	W	PTS	12	
Aug. 17	Antonio Picardi	Sheffield	W	TKO	3	
Oct. 12	Freddy Cruz	Sheffield	W	TKO	6	
Nov. 19	Laureano Ramirez	Cardiff	W	TKO	3	
1995						
Jan. 21	Armando Castro	Glasgow	W	TKO	4	
Mar. 4	Sergio Rafael Liendo	Livingston	W	KO	2	
May 6	Enrique Angeles	Shepton Mallet	W	KO	2	
July 1	Juan Polo Perez	Kensington	W	KO	2	
Sept. 30	Steve Robinson	Cardiff	W	TKO	8	
1996						
Mar. 16	Said Lawal	Glasgow	W	KO	1	
Jun. 8	Daniel Alicea	Newcastle	W	KO	2	
Aug. 31	Manuel Medina	Dublin	W	TKO	11	
Nov. 9	Remigio Molina	Manchester	W	TKO	2	
1997						
Feb. 8	Tom Johnson	London	W	TKO	8	
May 3	Billy Hardy	Manchester	W	TKO	1	
July 19	Juan Cabrera	London	W	TKO	2	
Oct. 11	Jose Badillo	Sheffield	W	TKO	7	
Dec. 19	Kevin Kelly	New York	W	KO	4	
1998						
Apr. 29	Wilfredo Vasquez	Manchester	W	TKO	7	
Oct. 31	Wayne McCullough	Atlantic City, USA	W	Pts		

FIGHTS: 31 WON: 31 LOST: 0 KO'S: 28



LEFT TO RIGHT: Instead of using motion capture for the character dynamics, Codemasters have employed their bespoke animation system, building each boxer from an 800 polygon wire frame model, and layering them with textures. This kinematic system, say the developers, will create realistic, fast moving characters with instantaneous punches; and by the looks of things, it's shaping up nicely...



The arrogant persona which he has maintained for so long, however, now seems to be slipping a little, perhaps allowing some of the real Naseem Hamed shine through. The cock-sure self belief is still there, but with a record of 31 professional fights and 28 Knock Outs and no losses, you can maybe grant leeway to a man who seems to be becoming more and more human with each passing month.

He's come a long way since his public persona made him look constantly forced and two dimensional. With Naseem, the actions have always justified the words, and perhaps now, the words are no longer as necessary. It's possibly because he wants to steer away from the sort of ridicule that he attracted during his appearance on Fantasy Football last year, or that his innate sense for crowd pleasing realises that people can only take so much. He will almost certainly never be called 'reclusive', but nowadays the public are seeing a much more human side to Naseem which seems to be doing him well in both nurturing existing fans and even winning new alliances.

AND IN THE RED CORNER

Boxing games have never quite spawned the same number of titles as some sports genres, but here are just a few titles that have fought it out over the years.

Knockout Kings - PlayStation

Reviewed in last month's STATION, this is EAs 3D retro boxing game that lines up all of the oldest and greatest fighters – so that you can fight Haggler against Spinx time after time. Biggest drawback was that the game is too easy to begin with and then becomes very difficult later on.

Victory Boxing - PlayStation

The original and arguably first true 3D boxing game to come out saw JVC produce its first successful title on the PlayStation. Players battled their way through the lower leagues and listened to their trainers and hopefully became better as their fighters learned special moves and became faster and stronger. Possibly the first game to allow you to develop characters in one game and then save them out to use against your friends' best boxers.

Victory Boxing 2 - PlayStation

A surprisingly flawed sequel that saw the content changed to the detriment. Not a sequel that added much and one that took a little too much away from what was a great original game. We hope to see a vast improvement with *Victory Boxing 3* which is expected toward the end of 1999.

Mohamed Ali Boxing - Mega Drive

The original Mega Drive hit. Third-person perspective and 2D in the game, it was nonetheless quite playable although the Ali licence probably cost more than the game made in profit.

George Foreman Knockout Boxing - Mega Drive

Another 2D boxing game which owed it's gameplay to the fabulous *Punch Out* and *Punch Out 2* arcade machines. The game placed you as a wire frame outline moving around your opponent and wasn't bad, although it lacked any realism.

Punch Out I & II - Arcade

This is the arcade game that really showed how to make boxing games fun to play. You boxed as a wire frame player with a limited number of moves, but with a real sense of realism when you hit your opponent thanks to a flashing screen and some great sound effects. Great stuff!

LEFT TO RIGHT: **There are three modes of play, divided variously between management and fighting options, but in the end of the day, this is what it's all about. Put your opponent on the defensive before knocking the proverbial seven bells from him; and in addition to the boxing, there will be plenty of cut scenes for entrance, victory and defeat. But what did you expect from a game endorsed by the most flambouyant boxer Britain, and possibly the world, has ever spawned?**

PRINCE NASEEM: I am lucky in that I never had to look very hard or far to see the greatest inspirations in my life. For all of my 24 years, my father has remained a shining example to me, with what he has managed to achieve in his everyday life, overcoming all by maintaining his morals and the way that he and my mother brought up the nine of us. It is an inspiration to me everyday.

And now that inspiration that Naseem drew from those around him can be given back to a waiting army of fans. But even with his new found humility, he still remains adamant and proud of what he considers to be his greatest achievement to date...

PRINCE NASEEM: Being the father of Sami Naseem Salem Hamed is the crowning achievement in my life, which takes first place over anything else. It was my proudest and most emotional moment when I watched my son being born. The moment when I cut the cord will be with me for the rest of my life.

But what of the future? It would seem that the more popular Naseem gets, the less fights he seems to have. However this does leave him enough time to be able to look after his business empire, and with his renowned interest in all things PlayStation, it wasn't going to be long before he put his name to a boxing game. Prince Naseem Boxing will be released by Codemasters, but with the usual Naseem focus, he has been fascinated by the project.

PRINCE NASEEM: I am quite a games addict. I have even plugged in my PlayStation before fights. So having involvement in my game was crucial to me. Codemasters have given me the freedom and input that I wanted. I have been involved with the game's development during all its early stages and am thrilled with it so far. Everything that I'd want from my boxing game is captured – from the gritty realism to a complete game. The game offers everything that I look to achieve as a boxer – skill, technique and above all, to entertain. S

Monte Carlo Or Bust

After the unsatisfying experience of last year's official product, Ubi Soft hope to give Formula One fans the drive they have been waiting for.

Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulator 2

Publisher: Ubi Soft

Developer: In-House

Release Date: Spring

Game Type: Racing Sim

PAL Percentage Complete **50%**

LEFT TO RIGHT: It's those final seconds before the lights go green, the transmission engages and you erupt from the grid like a cruise missile. But wait, I think I left a tap running!: and he's off! The track that is... Damn.

The Early Verdict

Monaco G.P: For

Smooth graphics, accessible car physics and forgiving opponent AI should make this preferable to other F1 sims.

Monaco G.P: Against

Lack of official licence may put some off, and as there is a long way to go in production, some of the bolder claims may be hard to substantiate.

Anticipation Rating 50%

Given the right coverage as release nears, F1 fans will be drooling at the mention of its name. Others may be happy to stay with *GT* or *TOCA*.

Concept Description

Another outing for the best unofficial F1 sim, challenging for the championship crown.

A blinding ray of light shines forth from Ubi Soft to disperse the clouds of anger and despair shrouding a legion of racing fans let down by *F1 '98* last year. Or that's what they'd like us to think, anyway.

The thing is, they might actually be right.

Despite it's title, Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulator 2 promises faithful reproduction of circuits from all around the world, rendered in glorious hi-res with glitch free smooth scrolling. The vehicles should have fully light sourced bodywork and shadow casting, but more importantly, MGPRS2 is offering a set of car physics which retain accuracy without the completely unforgiving realism of its rival. In fact, it has been billed as the best hybrid of sporting fun available, and should be a far more enjoyable experience than the annoyingly innaccessible *F1 '98*.

We are also promised three level car damage and a comprehensive array of car statistics for you to twiddle and tweak to your heart's content (including suspension, camber, downforce and tyre types), as well as two player link up or split screen options for multiplayer action. Promising to have learnt the lessons of *TOCA 2* and *GT*, the opponent AI will also break any monotony by skidding and crashing cars as a matter of course.

Without the endorsement of the FIA, naturally there are a few things that don't quite seem right. Playing as Dave Schumacher or Geoff Coultard may set the teeth on edge, and Benetton, Ferrari and Jordan will not feature in the starting line up. But this is unavoidable... or is it? For those budding Frank Williams' there will be full team and driver editor to play around with, so it shouldn't be too hard to recreate your favourite names and colours from the real life world of petrol soaked tarmac, should you so wish.

"Without the endorsement of the FIA, there are a few things that don't seem right. But playing as Dave Schuamcher is avoidable..."

This should be eagerly awaited by racing fans, and could easily replace the FIA title as the people's choice. If only the same could be done with Geoffrey Robinson.

The Calm Before...

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PlayStation

THQ

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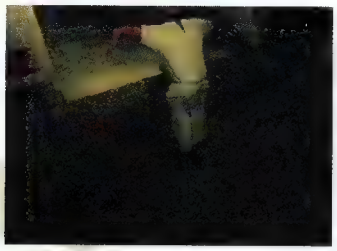
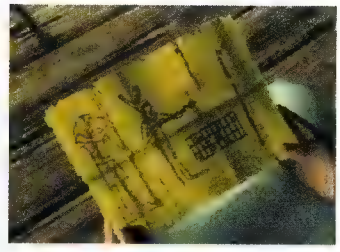
Tomb Invader

It's a land of mystery now, but over 3000 years ago it was the dominant civilisation upon the planet Earth. Life really doesn't get a lot more exciting than this, or does it?





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Here's where we didn't read the symbols correctly and didn't see the edge of the tunnel. We fell down and died; another staircase and another wall painted in mysterious symbols. These Egyptians never got out very much did they?; a lonely man sitting by a river looking at a piece of paper and in denial. Geddit? In The Nile... in denial. Oh, never mind; at least this piece of parchment (that's what they used to call paper in the old days) has nice big pictures of things on it.

Eygpt 1156 B.C.

Publisher: **Cryo Interactive**

Developer: **In-House**

Release Date: **October**

Game Type: **Dialogue Adventure**

PAL Percentage Complete **70%**

The Early Verdict

Egypt 1156 B.C.: For

It's a very different type of game to challenge console players with and definitely gets you using your head.

Egypt 1156 B.C.: Against

The whole thing – from the access time to load up the speech to the pace of the gameplay – is tediously slow.

Anticipation Rating 10%

Strictly for the Egyptologist in the family. Which means roughly three people in the entire country will be looking forward to this.

Concept Description

A thinking man's thinking game.

A land of mystery and excitement, with tombs to explore and ancient customs to be observed, Egypt is definitely one of the most interesting places on Earth. So basing a game around the time when it was practically the centre of the universe opens up lots of gaming avenues.

So, what can you expect to see? Well, there's plenty of sand, lots and lots of people and, of course, complex networks of tombs to explore. The background to all this action is a tale of family honour, the task in hand being to prove your father's innocence after he has been accused of pillaging a royal tomb.

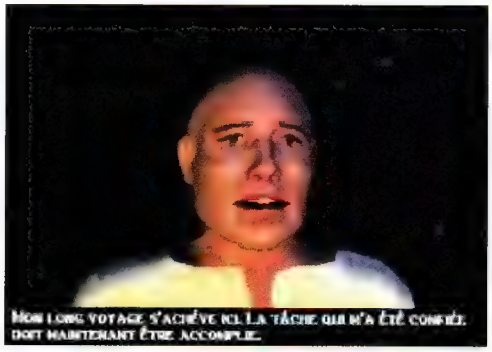
Now, if you're intrigued by all this, wait a minute. Because what you're not going to get is some scantily clad heroine running around the place shooting people with a myriad of different weapons. This is a more cerebral role-playing game, in which talking to the right people and asking the right questions will bring about your success.

The way it works is very simple. Move your cursor around the screen, find the place that activates the icon, press a button and then enter that area. You'll usually find someone to talk to, and they'll only answer a couple of questions before ignoring you or running away. So you have to choose what to say wisely, or you'll never find that piece of information you're after.

There are plenty of similar games available for the PC. But with lots of real speech drawn off the CD and some generally nice graphics as well the PlayStation has never seen anything quite like this.

The game relies on the speech element to give it atmosphere and indeed this works well. But it's the puzzles and attention to detail that tax your brain and make a game of it. As soon as all the elements are in place, this might well turn out to be a immersive experience well worth your time and energy. Only time will tell.

"You'll usually find someone to talk to, and they'll only answer a couple of questions before ignoring you or running away."



LEFT TO RIGHT: This is you. Not very Egyptian looking are you? Still, you'll be glad to know that the mouth moves realistically when you talk. Well, not really; now to our untrained eye this looks like an outdoor 'Bring Your Own Torch' party. What? Are you saying the Egyptians didn't have barbecues?

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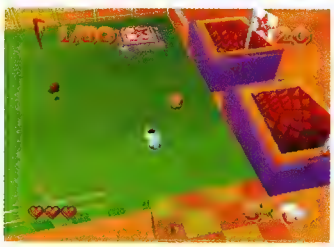
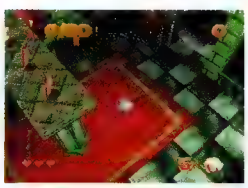
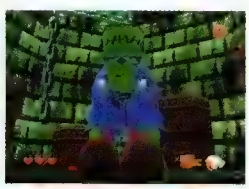


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The prerequisite floating camera seems to be shaping up nicely; that refreshing Colgate smile probably doesn't bode well. I've always found clowns a bit macabre to be honest; one of the best aspects to the game is going to be the humour element. looks kind of bizarre doesn't it?; there's always some guy waiting for you at the end of the level, but with no guns you're completely armless! Time for a bit of initiative.

It started with a bang. Not the universe, at least not for sure, but the plot of this sparkling new platformer from Hasbro. Having already flexed its muscles, albeit those of the lower arm only, on the N64, Glover is making its way to the PSX for the early summer.

Part character based 3D platformer, part fiendish puzzler and part RPG, all the right elements seem to have been drawn from the genres this tour de force straddles. The defining characteristic of this game, however, will be the extra something it brings – the originality that seperates a good game from a great one.

There's this wizard who, during a spot of spellcasting, has managed to turn himself into stone and imbue his gloves with a form of sentience. In keeeping with the best folk tale

Rolling All Over The Worlds

In his quest to regain the balls of magic, our hero must, as usual, travel to several different worlds, ranging from the fantastic to the very bizarre.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Playing the game promises to be a truly electrifying experience worth waiting for. Not like this one, fortunately: don't do this at home kids – ten reasons why friction is a good thing.

traditions, one glove has turned out evil, and one, naturally your character, has become the disembodiment of good.

As Glover, you must find and collect the seven crystals of power that were scattered during the comotion that followed your master's mistake, and naturally, your evil counterpart will be doing his damnedest to stop you. Once you have all the crystals, simply return them back to the wizard and thwart the malintention of your nemisis, although seeing as this probably involves the loss of Glover's own self awareness, I wonder if he'd actually do it...

Sounds simple enough, but the gameplay lies in the one obstacle that makes the task that little bit tricky – no pockets, see? Fortunately for Glover, the crystals have transmogrified themselves into balls, so that he can roll them around. Further ingenuity is shown as Glover himself can change their substance, and it's up to you to decide which would be the most appropriate. For example a light ball could be manhandled up a level or two, whereas a heavy one could be used to smash obstacles down. The choices include bowling ball, ball bearing and the more geometric crystal.

You can move the balls by pushing them, or, if you prefer, riding on top of them, which it has to be said is much more fun. Of course, when on top of a sphere, all normal expectations are reversed, making controling the balls a whole challenge in itself, which has the potential to add dimensions of pleasure for the discerning gamesplayer. Running forward sends the ball backward, and likewise left becomes right etc. For the first few tries, the only direction you'll manage will be the wrong one.

The structure of the game is based around finding one ball per level encountered, and the level design is themed around ideas like Atlantis, Carnival, Prehistoric, Fear and Out Of This World, a sci-fi mega fest. The levels all promise to be vast expanses, explorable in true 3D.

Hasbro have recently been joined in the software production stakes by arch rivals Mattel from the more traditional world of childrens toys, and will obviously be hoping to prove their superiority with this title. As you would expect from a company with a pedigree in doll making, there won't be anything gutsy to attract the adult gamer to this product, and the main drawback may be the perception of it as a kiddies game. We hope that Glover will transcend this, because it could be quite special. There are obvious nods in many directions, *Mario* and *Marble Madness* immediatly spring to mind, and the final mix could be cooked to a tee. Like all great dishes, however, it takes more than reading a good recipe book and using the right ingredients.

"Both character adventure and puzzle all the right elements seem to have been drawn from the genres this tour de force straddles."

Glover

Publisher: Hasbro

Developer: Interactive Studios

Release Date: 2nd QTR

Game Type: 3D Platform/Puzzler

PAL Percentage Complete 50%

The Early Verdict

Glover: For

A platformer with a real difference, well recieved in its N64 incarnation.

Glover: Against

Stiff competition, and ball rolling antics may become a little frustrating.

Anticipation Rating 30%

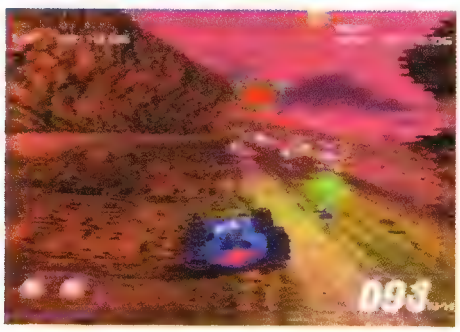
Relatively unknown at the moment, but things may change as release gets closer.

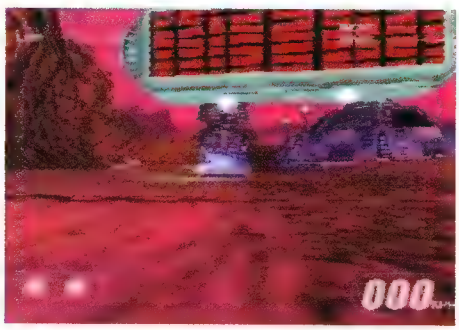
Concept Description

Puzzles and platforms blended to create a title with originality and flair.

Roll With It

Take a racing car and then put wheels on it that allow it to race any which way but fast. Enter the topsy turvey world of Rollcage and let STATION ask the questions



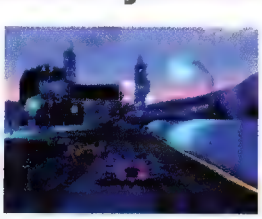


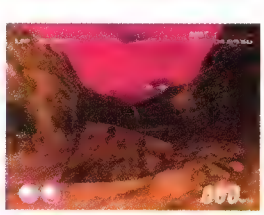
Rollcage is a wild game. A really wild game which it is difficult for me to do justice to without thrusting the controller into your hands, standing back and waiting for you to start dribbling. Rollcage is a racing game for sure, but thanks to the design of the six, ground-hugging chassis and the size of the wheels, there is a unique twist – these cars can carry on even when they are flipped over! Their indestructible shells also means that you don't even need to stick to any of the 11 circuits: you can sail off the track, bounce off walls or even race along the roofs of tunnels in this no-holds-barred sprint to the finish.

Rollcage Road Rage

ATD, the team behind the game, didn't just stop there though. As if hungry to see how much a joypad-wielding dribbling player

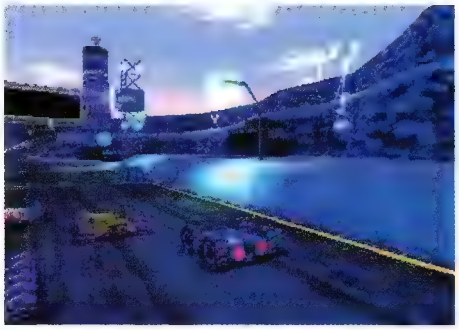
"it wouldn't be too surprising to see ATD squeeze just a little more out of the game and guarantee it the classic status that it deserves".

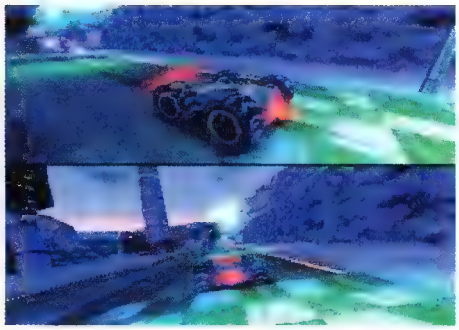




Softly, Softly

Treachery can be its own reward. Just park up and take a pot shot at a building across the bay, just as your opponent breaks into view. Delight in his terror as he is buried under a ton of rubble, or just bathe in the beauty of the igniting high explosive reflected in the water!!!





LEFT TO RIGHT: **The track graphics are high class, detailed and give a great impression of speed, but the off-track detail is outstanding!; the two player game is superb, with a surprising amount of track visible giving you an excellent opportunity to blast, shoot and maim opponents; after a particularly bad spin out in the true 3D environment, a helping hand from the HUD is often useful...**

can take, they've added outrageous weaponry to the cars too! 'I thought you said that they are indestructible?', you whine... Well yes, the cars are, but luckily enough the surrounding scenery isn't – so you can use weapons to destroy buildings ahead of you and try to cascade tons of concrete down onto your opponents. You can even send them spinning out of control by freezing the track ahead of them and use your car to smash into scenery leaving buildings tumbling in your wake.

Each of the 11 single player tracks, spread over four alien environments, has unique characteristics or weather, gravity and track design. Add to this the fact that Rollcage has been developed with multiplay in mind, although the PlayStation only has split screen modes at present. But it's nearing completion with five months to go before release, so it wouldn't be surprising to see a little bit more squeezed out to guarantee it the classic status that it truly deserves.

Rollcage

Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: ATD

Release Date: May

Game Type: Racing Sim

PAL Percentage Complete **95%**

Rolling Out The Answers

Rollcage developers, Attention To Detail, have taken the racing game and not only turned it upside down, but kept it going through 360 degrees of mayhem. Why?

STATION: ATD are currently doing great things with Rollcage, so where did you all learn your trade?

ATD: We're all pretty experienced really. In the last 10 years we've worked with Lucasfilm on *Night Shift* and the *Indiana Jones* series, with Activision to produce *Supersprint* and *Blast Chamber* and loads of others.

STATION: Where did your inspiration for Rollcage come from?

ATD: It really came from Stephen Bennetts and Stuart Tiley, (the game's lead programmer and producer), who decided that they wanted to create a racing game where the player is kept in the thick of the action until they reach the chequered flag. The only way to do this was to have indestructible cars that would always land on their tyres no matter what. Once the cars were indestructible, we could have them drive on walls, ceilings and even crash through buildings.

STATION: What aspect of the game are you most proud of?

ATD: The game has pushed the team to make so many achievements in many areas. To get eight, original and good-looking power-ups is not an easy task but SpeedUp, Shield, Wormhole, TimeWarp, DrillerMissile, LockOnMissile, LeaderMissile and IceSheet are all lovely effects that are great to watch. The single best thing about the game has to be the handling though. We have built one of the most accurate physics models available.

STATION: What do the power-ups do that is different then?

ATD: Well, some of them are obvious but are used within the game to different effect. SpeedUp gives you a short, extra boost of speed – great for catching a bit of air after a jump. Shield engulfs the car to protect it against collisions with opponents, buildings, rubble and bits of scenery. WormHole opens up in front of your car and then shoots ahead to attach it to the car in front of you. Get it right and your opponent will be sucked into the hole and deposited behind you on the track. Great when your opponent is hard to overtake. TimeWarp slows down everyone else on the track, whilst DrillerMissile fires three spiralling rockets forward – the ensuing explosions can blow up buildings or knock opponents off the track. The LockOnMissile targets scenery like buildings or billboards etc, so with the right timing you can bring them down on opponents in front or behind you. The LeaderMissile goes straight for the car in the lead. Once fired, the leader can hear an invaders-like beep which gets faster as the missile gets closer. Lastly the IceSheet covers the road ahead in an ice sheet that your car is impervious to. Useful in the tunnels!

STATION: What about music?

ATD: We're really excited about it as we've just finished talking to Fat Boy Slim and EZ Rollers who will be providing the soundtracks so you can expect excellent music, especially for Fat Boy fans.

The Early Verdict

Rollcage: For

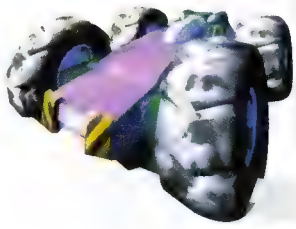
Great graphics yet fast and furious, the armed and dangerous gameplay has hard-hitting attitude which makes this a racing game to wait for!

Rollcage: Against

It would have been nice to build your own car and save it out to play against your mates and you can't turn the lights on and there isn't a horn – other than that, it's shaping up REALLY well!

Anticipation Rating 85%

This game looks moody and atmospheric and the tracks are varied and chock full of detail.

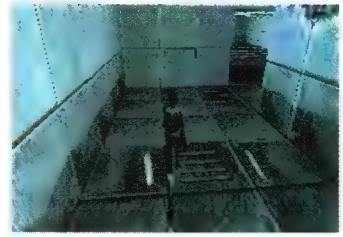
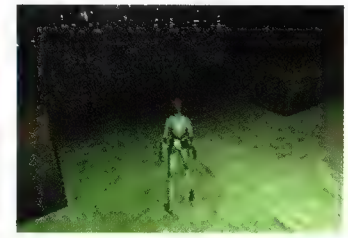


Concept Description

Street racing where you can use the whole track including the roofs of tunnels and pedestrian walkways where there are no rules.

Viral Condition

Tagged as the game to launch Cryo in the UK market, Virus offers a macabre blend of *Aliens* and *Tomb Raider*, in an infectious kind of way.

Virus

Publisher: Cryo Interactive Ent.

Developer: In-House

Release Date: 2nd QTR '99

Game Type: Action/Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete **40%**

The Early Verdict

Virus: For

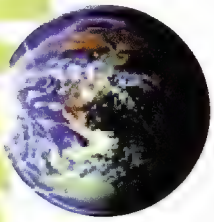
The atmosphere is suitably imposing, as are the dark visuals. Thumbs up for the rendered sequences, they rock.

Virus: Against

Movies are movies and games are games, never the twain shall meet. Movie licences will inevitably disappoint, and this early code of Virus is a tad un-inspiring.

Anticipation Rating 20%

Have you heard about the movie? Nope. Do you have any faith in a product labelled Cryo? Nope, don't be daft! Not the best recommendation, is it now?



Concept Description

Aliens at sea.

Once more into the breach. This particular 3D third person action adventure puts you in control of Joan Averil, an Assistant District Attorney investigating a mysterious series of murders, all of which have involved the removal of limbs in favour of bionic replacements. In her pursuit of whichever mad scientist is performing these experiments, Averil finds herself upon a mysterious, seemingly unmanned, ship floating adrift miles out to sea.

This is the point of the story at which the player takes over. Averil begins to explore the ship for clues as to the fate of the crew, and the identity of the killer.

Virus is based upon the movie of the same name, which stars Jamie Lee Curtis as Averil and is due to be released in the UK in April. Another gothic sci-fi action thriller à la *Alien Trilogy*, the game is part of a current crop being developed by Cryo, the French developer whose previous foray into the world of the film licence was the entirely unremarkable *Barb Wire*.

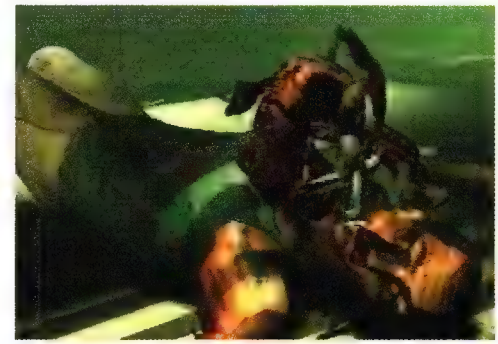
Although the game's relation to the movie is strong, with level and character designs remaining faithful to the original concept, it owes almost as great a debt to *Tomb Raider* in the final execution of ideas. The dark and moody atmosphere across the 11 environments is straight from the cinema, but Joan Averil's movement is all Lara.

Perhaps this is not doing the developers just credit, however, as although the gameplay of Virus will involve all the usual running and jumping and tumbling like a circus clown, it is destined to be far more action packed in nature. Averil will slowly accumulate an arsenal to put Duke Nukem to shame, with a selection ranging from the humble 9mm through to the mighty grenade launcher et al.

The bio-engineered assailants that stand between you and victory also come in around forty different flavours, from the merely macabre to the gut-wrenchingly gruesome.

We are hopeful. The plot and concept show considerable promise, and the game is still in early stages of development. Although the movie tie-in is not the strongest of pedigrees to emerge from, attach a decent standard of gameplay and cutting edge graphics and this could be a package to watch out for.

"All the usual running, jumping and tumbling like a circus clown, but far more action packed in nature."



LEFT TO RIGHT: We got hold of a very early version of the code, there's lots of rough edges yet to clean up, and the character models are still fairly basic, I mean this doesn't bear even a passing resemblence to Jamie Lee Curtis. The purple thing does look very purple though; this will not be a game for the tight lipped or faint hearted...

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TEKKEN 2

TOMB RAIDER

GRAND THEFT AUTO

COMMAND & CONQUER

It's Just An Illusion

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Dreams

Publisher: Cryo Interactive

Developer: In-House

Release Date: April

Game Type: 3D Action/Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete **75%**

The Early Verdict

Dreams: For

There's some fantastic visuals combined with genuine artistic flair and also the chance to choose from three characters.

Dreams: Against

Very flimsy gameplay that has no real focus. Unless the control system and action quota are tweaked this could be over before it's begun.

Anticipation Rating 40%

Some people may get excited about the visuals, but the rest of us know better than to judge a game on looks alone

Concept Description

A 3D platform game mixed with some lysergic acid diethylamide.

LEFT TO RIGHT: **The face in the middle is not amused, and judging from our heroines' body language, neither is she; the after effects of your spell casting carry on the spectacular graphic treats. They also clear your path, so you can carry on.**

Everybody loves to dream. In movies and TV shows the world over introducing a dream scene is a chance for the director to go wild, to experiment with colour schemes and eventually to let people wake up in showers having experienced a whole different life.

Thankfully, Dreams use the opportunity to likewise have some fun with colours and take gross liberties with storyline. The first time you see the intro sequence to this game, you'll be blown away.

While you watch the *Tekken* intros and spit out variations on the ooh and ahh theme, Dreams takes you to a place where you mumble things like 'what were they on when they came up with that idea?' and more importantly, 'where can I get some?'.

This wildly extroverted ambiance spills over into the frankly odd gameplay. Although this could be described as your average 3D action game, there's so much weird stuff happening to you that you don't really notice. Not only do you have to contend with playing as three very bizarre characters (a boy, a girl and er, a big blue polygon thing), you also have to fight devilish creatures, kick small flaming pixie-things and approach and talk to what look like small men wearing very tall pointy hats. Oh, and when they die they explode in a hail of spangly stars. Like I said, this is one weird game.

And if you're not content with all of that, then using different types of magic and harnessing the ability to fly are also at your disposal.

The only suspect part of the game appears when you actually start to play it. At the moment, there's just not enough going on; difficulties only start to arise when you jump between platforms. It's then that the physics seem to be a little off and the floaty control system doesn't help. And we've jumped on and off enough platforms to know when things just aren't quite right.

At the present moment in time this is a game high on individuality with a little intrigue thrown in for good measure, all it needs is that little spark to bring it kicking to life. 6

"... you also have to fight devilish creatures, kick small flaming pixie-things and talk small men wearing very tall pointy hats."

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Copper Load Of This

The futuristic fuzz return to patrol the streets of Callisto once again. With more vehicles, levels and bigger domes, Weapons of Justice is trying to be more than just a sequel.

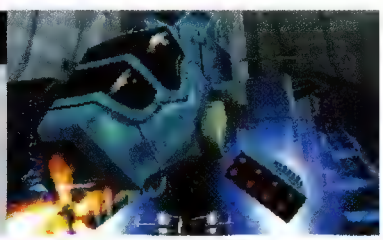
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Try picking a strange camera view and you can completely lose sight of your target, great!; the Venom V2 in all it's missile lobbing glory.

Space aged choppers featured heavily in Psygnosis' highly acclaimed G-Police title.

Set in a dark future which harked to the environment and atmosphere of the sci-fi classic *Blade Runner*, the game took place on a far off planet where the Government Police Force – the G-Police – struggled to keep control of the restless masses. The player became a G-Police officer who joined the force to try and discover the truth of his sister's death. It relied heavily on a well formed plot, and the mission objectives linked with the FMV sequences and story line to keep an even flow.

Fork the Plot

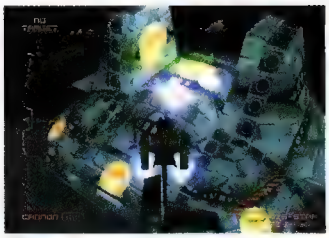
The story doesn't follow a set path during the game, the success you have in completing a mission will affect the way the plot turns. These forks in the story will mean that you'll want to replay the game and see the other routes the tale can take.

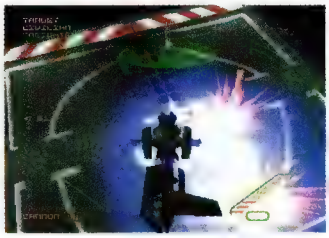


Big Domes

G-Police: Weapons of Justice follows in much the same vein, with the story line continuing from the first game. Rather than just being a sequel the game is pitched as an expansion of the original; instead of just knocking together a few new missions, Psygnosis

ABOVE: The Raptor introduces some ground and air based combat to the game.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The landscapes are far more lavishly designed than in the original; the Havoc goes in to action spraying fire over decent, innocent people. Mental!; the new ED-209 style Raptor launches itself after a baptism of fire; some of the buildings now feature brightly lit landing pads so that you can hone your vertical take-off and landing skills upon them.

has made a concerted effort to increase the game's appeal and accessibility. It will feature 30 new missions, again contained within the 16 domes of the city. This time round, though, the domes have increased in size which gives you much more room to move about in. You have five airborne and ground vehicles to play with and they come equipped with a total of 25 different weapons, all complete with stunning visual effects.

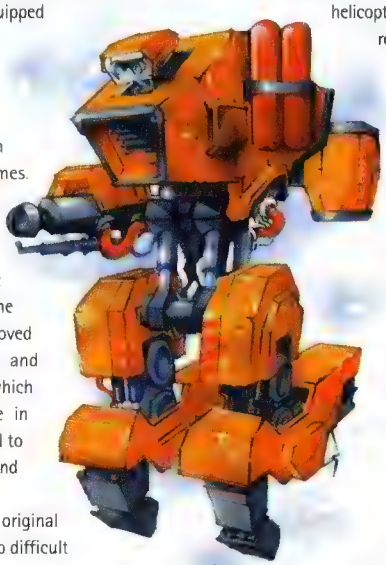
The enemy AI has also been improved – they will now attack in teams rather than alone, and even set-up ambushes in the tunnels which link the city domes. Travelling through these tunnels is far more realistic than in the predecessor, instead of simply warping between domes you must navigate claustrophobic passages to reach the next section. The levels themselves have also been improved with themed areas such as mining and industrial regions, unlike the first game which suffered from repetitive landscapes. The in game voiceovers have also been retouched to better complement the on screen action and add a little more realism to the game.

One of the main complaints of the original was that the game control was initially too difficult for most and the learning curve a little too steep. To combat these niggles, Psygnosis has overhauled the control system making it simpler and far more intuitive. The training missions have been removed and instead the player learns combat and control skills from mission one. GP2 has also been designed especially for the PlayStation, so should feature dual shock compatibility with support for analogue control, but how this will be implemented is yet to be seen.

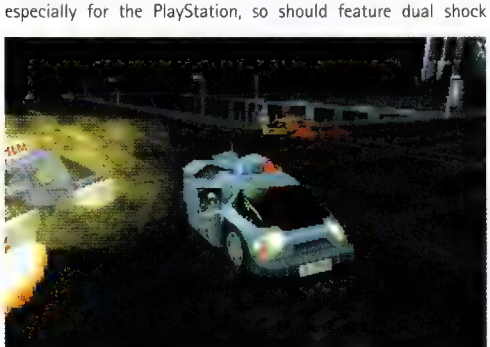
Craft Work

The main vehicle in the first game was the Havoc, a kind of rotorless helicopter with jet engines. It makes a welcome return in the sequel and remains pretty much unchanged. The Venom is a faster and more powerful replacement for the Havoc which briefly appeared in G-Police, and the updated V2 version has been included in Weapons of Justice. The Raptor features as a ground support unit (although it does have some limited aerial abilities), and is a mech style ATV looking much like the sinister ED-209 from the Robocop films. You can also take to the road in the armoured Rhino car and cause all sorts of chaos from street level. Little is yet known about the final craft, called Corsair, but it's believed to be another airborne vehicle. The control method is the same for each, meaning that once you get to grips with one, you'll have no trouble with the rest.

If Psygnosis really have sorted out the control difficulties and made the game easier to pick up, then the title is heading to be a sure fire hit. These alterations may have an adverse effect however, as avid fans of the original may be put off – especially if the game has been given an arcade type feel. Only a playtest in a later issue will tell. On the whole, the future in the game may be dark, but it looks bright on this side of reality.



"Psygnosis have overhauled the control system making it simpler and far more intuitive."



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: With the Rhino you can pile through traffic as if it wasn't there; close up dog fights are likely to be a very common occurrence in Weapons of Justice.

G–Police: Weapons of Justice

Publisher: **Psygnosis**

Developer: **In–House**

Release Date: **March**

Game Type: **Futuristic Shooter**

PAL Percentage Complete 70%

The Early Verdict

G–Police: Weapons of Justice: For

With the addition of new vehicles, larger domes and a more intuitive control method, GP2 could attract the audience the original failed to muster.

G–Police: Weapons of Justice: Against

If the learning curve and control system haven't improved enough then it may still be a little too hard for the average gameplayer to get into.

Anticipation Rating 80%

The original *G-Police* didn't really take off but with a more appealing approach the sequel promises to do better.

Concept Description

Shoot 'em-up with space rozzers of the future.

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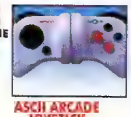

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SUPPLIER OF COMPUTER GAMES!
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Played and Rated

[44] – A Bug's Life [46] – Viva Football [50] – Premier Manager 98-99 & Player Manager '99 [56] – Max Power Racing [58] – Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf '99
[60] – Bloodsports [62] – NBA Live '99 [64] – Monkey Hero [66] – Sensible Soccer: Euro Club Edition [68] – Brunswick Pro Circuit Bowling
[70] – X Games Pro Boarders [72] – SMALL REVIEWS: Asteroids, Time Crisis, Megaman X4, Megaman Legends
[74] – R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 [80] – R-Type Delta [82] – One on One [83] – Street Fighter 2 Collection

Out On The Town...

The final ratings in STATION are presented as percentages. Below is a handy definition of scorings brackets so you know exactly how we treat our scoring system and what the percentages mean.

90-100%
The best, to cut a long story short. You are feeling great, you can't walk more than two inches without stumbling or vomiting and you insist that there are aliens in your pint. Which isn't yours...

80-89%
Still fairly admirable, your state of intoxication extends to calling your best mate Maureen and walking into the women's toilet with sunglasses on. At night.

70-79%
You've been told not to have any more or you will get drunk. Unfortunately you've already spilt a drink, told the barmaid that she is 'quite nice' and have offered to punch the dodgy looking geezer by the bar.

60-69%
Mildy tipsy, you've confessed to sleeping with your best mate's girlfriend and have had an in depth converstaion about the pros and cons of *Star Trek* over *Ally McBeal*.

50-59%
You've slipped a couple of pints down your neck and you're affected only to the point of an ocassional slurred word or lingering look at the opposite sex.

40-49%
A swift pairing of Jack Daniel's and a mild measure of Diamond White has got things rolling but you aren't fully in the zone

30-39%
One can of Sainsbury's 39p beer isn't going to put you any further towards your goal or place you in the area. Er, man.

20-29%
Ready for action you've eaten a pack of wine gums under the impression that they contain alcohol.

10-19%
Christmas has come and you've eaten a pack of liqueurs which has made you feel bloated and look very silly.

0-9%
In a desperate attempt to add some zest into your life you've drunk a bottle of Old Spice. Now you feel very ill indeed.

Trust the Triple A

The Triple A stamp is our personal guarantee to you that this game means business. We promise that everyone – apart from the most pedantic buffoons – will reap months, if not years of enjoyment from it. The gameplay is unsurpassable, the visuals put Leonardo Da Vinci to shame and the sound has been lovingly caressed by the ghost of Amadeus. Perfection is subjective, therefore a perfect game can never exist, but a Triple A award is as close as it gets.

Talking Pages

Here is a quick guide to what to expect on the pages of STATION's Played and Rated section:

SCORE
This is what you're looking for. This is the country's most respected PlayStation magazine score: 100% unofficial, 100% unbiased, 100% honest!

PLUS/MINUS
Two reasons why you should consider this game, two reasons why you should be wary.

+	In-depth and thoughtful gameplay.
+	Superb Eastern soundtrack.
-	The camera comes unstuck at times.
-	Some frustrating gameplay elements.

Played and Rated Index

44 **A Bug's Life**
"A Bug's Life is the creation of Traveller's Tales, responsible for the nice but gameplay devoid *Rascal*."

46 **Viva Football**
"What is obviously a novelty concept actually manages to escape the evil word novelty itself."

50 **Premier Manager 98–99 & Player Manager '99**
"After waiting for a decent footie management sim, two come along at the same time. Like buses really."

56 **Max Power Racing**
"You really have to admire anyone that brings out a racing game in the face of competition being fielded by Sony or Codemasters."

58 **Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf '99**
"Tiger Woods, within a couple of years of turning professional, was the biggest golfing star ever."

60 **Bloodsports**
"It's a futuristic version of tag."

62 **NBA Live '99**
"Did you know that the minimum salary for a player in the NBA is $365,000 per year. That's about £225,000. Cool huh?"

64 **Monkey Hero**
"When playing this game you have to contend with the inexplicable, but you also get the downright hilarious."

66 **Sensible Soccer: Euro Club Edition**
"Whenever you read the debate about appearance over gameplay, *Sensible Soccer* was always talked about as the pinnacle of gameplay."

68 **Brunswick Pro Circuit Bowling**
"Behold the high octane, action-packed world of... Ten Pin Bowling!"

70 **X Games Pro Boarders**
"Sony now bring us their second snowboarding game of the season."

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ASTEROIDS
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MEGAMAN LEGENDS

74 **R4: Ridge Racer Type 4** [IMPORT]
"First and foremost are the visuals which don't just bowl you over, but kick you whilst you're down."

80 **R-Type Delta** [IMPORT]
"A classic that has single-handedly kept Irem in business since its first appearance back in the mid '80s."

82 **One on One** [IMPORT]
"Hot horse shit always sells better than cold."

83 **Street Fighter 2 Collection** [IMPORT]
"The reputation of the game precedes itself, so you're already hyped up about playing it."

R4: RIDGE RACER 4

Namco's biggest release since *Tekken 3* steps up to STATION's podium and preapres to be judged alongside the industry standard racer *Gran Turismo*. It's slick, fast and so hi-res you can be blinded by the shimmering surrounds. We think arcade racer fans could have found a new squeeze.

A BUG'S LIFE

A Disney classic comes to the PlayStation with an impressive 3D engine and characters so cute that you could vomit just by looking at them all at once. We all know that the PlayStation is constantly in search of a Mario quality platformer and Spyro has come close – is this closer?

BRUNSWICK PRO CIRCUIT BOWLING

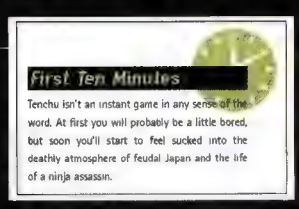
A budget THQ game rolls into the office unexpectedly and proves to be a bit of an office hot potato – love it or hate it, bowling is cool. The game only has EAs *Ten Pin Alley* as competition, so can Brunswick topple the king of the balls or will it merely roll alongside?

ICONS
Does the game utilise any peripherals: steering wheel, Dual Shock pad, memory card etc.

The Competition
Tomb Raider
What can I say? If you haven't heard of this, you may just as well stick your head back up your arse
Metal Gear Solid
Okay so it's not out yet but the stealth aspects are very similar to those of Tenchu
Bushido Blade
The visuals and settings mirror Tenchu, although Bushido Blade's gameplay is much more beat-'em-up oriented.

THE COMPETITION
Life is full of choices. Whatever the review score, there may be an alternative to the game in question, and this is where you will find it.

FIRST TEN MINUTES
Do first impressions really count? Is it love at first sight or instant repulsion? Find out here.


First Ten Minutes
Tenchu isn't an instant game in any sense of the word. At first you will probably be a little bored, but soon you'll start to feel sucked into the deathly atmosphere of feudal Japan and the life of a ninja assassin.

A BUG'S

Disney Interactive have joined forces with Traveller's Tales and translated the cheeky celluloid caper for the PlayStation. It's a hard Bug's Life...

A Bug's Life

Publisher: Sony

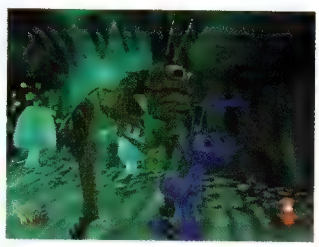
Developer: Traveller's Tales

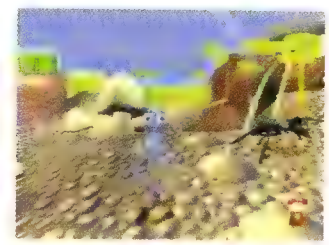
Release Date: March

Game Type: Platformer

No of Players: One

Price: £39.99





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Now I have you, little one. The grasshopper sneaks up on an unsuspecting Flik; swinging is fun, especially if you're using a Dual Shock pad: Flik is well rendred and cartoony despite being a collection of polygons.

Disney films are usually good – there can be no disputing that. Who hasn't laughed at the childish shenanigans of Donald Duck or become a bit misty eyed over *The Lion King*? Some of you will have, I'm sure. The Disney game heritage isn't as sparkling as one would expect from the world's leading animators, however. On the PlayStation the only benchmark for this kind of platformer is the disappointingly basic Hercules which followed the tradition of merely being a well animated 2D platformer with lots of movie clips and sound samples.

A Bug's Life is the creation of Traveller's Tales, the developer responsible for the nice looking but rather gameplay devoid *Rascal* from Psygnosis. The commercial masterplan of passing a huge licence onto a small developer leaves us full of trepidation, yet the 3D feel of the title doesn't immediately stand up and admit it's from such humble origins – in fact, such is the defined style, the game could have happily been included on the mid regions of Shiny Entertainment's 1999 schedule.

Starting to play A Bug's Life, as a blue ant called Flik, it's refreshing to see that the game has a standard of 3D which at least approaches the standard of *Spyro The Dragon*. Textured floors give way to expanding toadstools, acorns and towering foliage which acts as either a ladder or *Indiana Jones* style ropes. It's clear from the start that A Bug's Life is aimed squarely at the 'younger gamer' – commonly known as the child whose parents have a disposable income and desires licensed products of everything down to the decal y-fronts. We usually frown on such commercial games but thankfully bumbling about the levels – which feels strangely similar to *Medievil* in gameplay terms – is fun and the token video clips from the films are of a good enough quality to warrant a slight chuckle. The bandy legged hero causes much amusement as he staggers around

First Ten Minutes

The space of the open levels is impressive and the characters look neat but the in game camera seems to be jolting all over the place. We do hope that this isn't a Disney cash in.

Compatibility

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The inflated mushrooms act as organic trampolines, handy for escaping enemies and reaching new levels; berries are Flik's main weapon, but to kill bosses and larger insects you'll need the blue variety.

LIFE

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The atmosphere of nature and growth is one of the features the game tries to link with the film. Hence the acorn grows into scalable foliage; the cavernous levels feature surprise foes such as this earthworm who shoots out of the wall without warning.

enemies like a pissed stick insect on stilts. Sadly the nature of his movement isn't 'at one' with the floating camera, which was likewise a failing of *Rascal*. It isn't too severe and is unlikely to put you off the game if you haven't experienced the slinky camera dynamics of *Spyro The Dragon*.

What might put you off is the constant wisecracks from Flik, using genuine voice actors from the film. The suspect difficulty level of the early levels is also a bit strange – it's possible to breeze through the first four levels and trounce the boss without any loss of life.

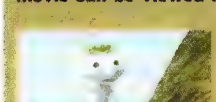
Tinkerbell Trail Blazer

The enemies vary from the most common, the evil grasshoppers who congregate in clans and are twice the size of you, to earthworms and the dreaded wood lice. It's all quite Mario-esque in it's execution – expanding mushrooms are used as high platforms and seeds grow into plants that you can climb. Hint points litter each level and give you a quick idea of where you are supposed to be going – the screen turns into an oval shape and some cute narration guides you to the exit. As if this Nintendo style guide wasn't enough, there's also a handy flying bug on the first level who directs you to by calling 'follow me' in Tinkerbell tones. The fact that children, or younger gameplayers, don't need this much guidance seems to have been completely ignored by the creators, who seem intent on stuffing the good looking levels full of easy paths and end of level video sequences. *Heart of Darkness* managed to maintain the right balance of instruction and hints while still appealing to a very young audience, but A Bug's Life fails to emerge from the land of Fisher Price gameplay. You'll be able to fly on dandelion seeds and negate all forms of shrubbery and common back garden pests, but it's far too formulaic and simple to challenge *Spyro*.

We'd advise that this title is only a viable option if you're obsessed with Disney, are – in all truth – a bit crap at games or fancy an aesthetically pleasing stress relieving device. Float about those levels, look at the cute adversaries and drift into the sky of diamonds. It's the videogame equivalent of that A Bug's Life duvet really – quite snug and fun for a while but you wouldn't be seen dead using it.

Disney Magic

The cut scenes from the Disney film are all featured and in *Heart of Darkness* style you can access a theatre mode, where clips from the movie can be viewed in fairly impressive video form.

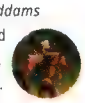


The Competition

Croc –
EAs Platinum basic 3D platformer is simple, colourful yet far too dated to be worth considering over the rest of the competition.

Spyro the Dragon –
Insomniac's often discounted 3D platformer is the slickest 3D platformer on the PlayStation and directly targets *A Bug's Life's* audience before hitting its mark.

Medievil –
Beetlejuice style action in an *Addams Family* atmosphere. A polished platformer with a long lifespan, bones, zombies and broadswords. Spooked out stuff indeed.



Rated by MC Melville

STATION

Childish platformer which will appeal to those who want an easy life and a simple game.

+ Luscious graphics.
+ Some comic moments.
- Constant reminders that you a playing a child's game.
- About as hard as a microwaved knob of butter.

OUT OF 100

67

VIVA FO

It seems that football games have been getting a bit stale as of late. I mean what can you really do with them that hasn't already been done? Well Virgin think they have the answer: produce a football game based on all the great teams of the past...

Viva Football

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

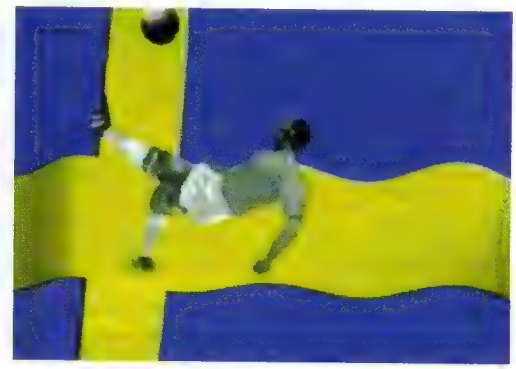
Developer: Crimson

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Football Sim

No of Players: 1–4

Price: £39.99



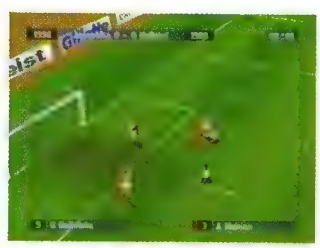
LEFT TO RIGHT: Commit a foul and nine times out of ten the referee will come down on you like a ton of bricks. The CPU controlled teams seem to be able to get away with murder; could this possibly be Pele's infamous overhead goal kick?

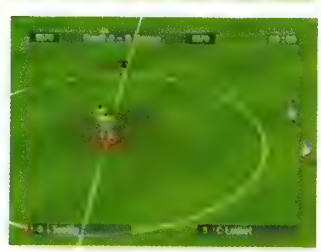
Novelty factor often disappears in the blink of an eye. But then that's the very nature of the word novelty isn't it? Viva Football though, takes novelty on face to face and actually comes out on top. What is obviously a novelty concept – a football game filled with famous World Cup teams from the past – actually manages to escape the crutches of the evil word itself.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that Viva Football is a soccer game designed with the hardened soccer fan in mind. I mean who really is interested in playing as a thirty year old England except for the football fanatic? Well, I am actually. I'm in no way a football fan but Viva Football transcends the concept of being a fan anyway. I mean, who doesn't want to re-live the 1966 World Cup with Bobby Charlton and company?

First Ten Minutes

After playing, and thoroughly enjoying the preview version of Viva Football I'm actually dismayed by what they've gone and done to it. The game seems to have changed a great deal and it's gonna take a lot of getting used to.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A new feature we haven't seen in a soccer game is the goal keeper rush. Hit L2 and your goalkeeper will run out to meet the ball; now that's what we like to see. The team that gave us English football's finest hour; nearly as gripping as playing as England '66 is kicking off with Pele in the 1970 World Cup.

Compatibility

OTBALL

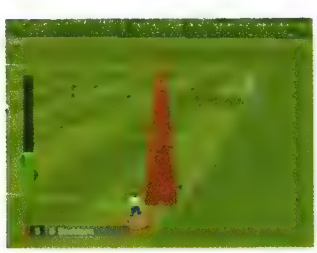
LEFT TO RIGHT: The spot kicks use the type of power meter that you'd find in a golf game. So you have to be quite precise. Alas this means spectacular Gazza style free-kicks are basically out of the question; this goal was I'm afraid, down to one of those dodgy goal-keeping errors/bugs I was talking about.

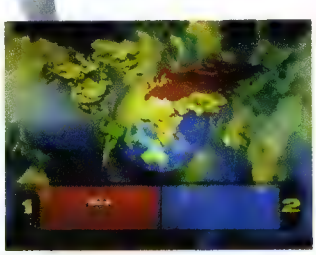
Who doesn't want to take the helm of the 1970 Brazilian team with the likes of Pele in the strike force? And who, honestly doesn't want to take Argentina on in that infamous semi-final with Maradonna and the dreaded 'Hand Of God', incident? Events of the past World Cups have been so ingrained in our minds and memories that it's impossible for even the non football fan to resist jumping into the Viva Football time machine in a bid to relive and change sporting history.

Hang Over

Which is all well and good. But if Viva Football plays like a hung-over Sunday league team then the time travelling capabilities it offers are no more use than a pair of football boots on an ice rink. Luckily then, Virgin have managed to come up with the proverbial goods on the gameplay front. Although I must stress that some unnecessary changes have been made since I laid eyes on the preview version.

In fact, I can't really put my finger on what's missing but the earlier version of the game I tested seemed to offer great deal of space on the pitch. You were able to play from side to side as well as the general football game hoof it up and back down. Sadly this feel of





LEFT TO RIGHT: You should visit the training ground if you're to fully master the complex controls and gameplay of Viva Football; Viva Football has a very high standard of presentation from the intro to this team select screen.

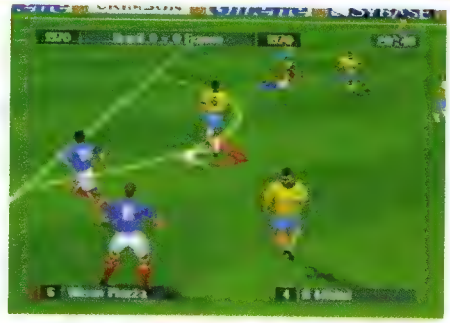
Goal Celebrations

The retro theme of Viva Football may transcend that novelty factor in fine style, but the ability you have to actually control your team's goal celebrations stays firmly rooted in the tree of difference. Pressing certain buttons will cause the goal scorer to perform certain gormless moves such as throwing a fist into the air, diving to the ground or pretending to be an aeroplane. This does actually serve to wind up your mates but you won't be so smug when someone else does the same to you when they score.

Intro

Football game intros. Hmmm. Most consist of a glut of video footage showing goals, hard tackles and goal celebrations, cut up in a 'yoof' culture 'in yer face' style.

Rather than going down this route though, Viva Football adds a little class to its intro. Basically what we get is a series of rendered scenes of famous moments from the world cup. These include various famous goals, a head-butt and the classic 'Hand Of God' incident.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Although not a guaranteed goal, there is a way of getting through to the keeper whenever you want. Simply hoof the ball high and straight from behind the centre line and your striker will be in a position to collect it and take the goal keeper on; unlike many football games, the close up views aren't so close that you can't see what's going on around you.

space has disappeared, or at least been negated in favour of a more traditional football game feel. Which isn't the end of the world when it's done this well.

Cliff Dive

The gameplay is at first very tough. You'll find your brain turning to pulp as it fights to send the correct signals to your digits. And although the learning curve is steep enough to cliff dive from, once you've grasped the controls, there really is no stopping you. The difficulty comes from the fact that all of the buttons do more than one thing. Take for instance the square button, which can be used for a snap shot, an aimed shot, panic clearance, header or volley. It's the same for the rest of the controls, just don't be daunted when you see them. Sadly there's no real skill mode which I must admit I've become accustomed to in some of the more recent football games but there's still plenty of moves to learn.

The control system, although daunting does provide a very in-depth and realistic game of soccer. And although it's complex, Viva Football still manages to make the action on screen as smooth and flowing as possible – once the person with the joy-pad in hand is competent with it anyway.

Lucky Pass

It's not all sweetness and light though Viva Soccer does lose vital points in a few areas. The flaws are mainly minor gameplay defects but nonetheless, they do add up to cause slight frustration. Firstly, the passing system relies a little

LEFT TO RIGHT: Every possible team formation you can think of is catered for alongside the ability to change your squad and move individual players; this shows part of the player controllable goal celebrations. And although it looks a little dodgy, you don't have the ability to go down on your team mates. (Unlucky Darren).

too much on luck, especially if you plan to put a through ball in. The problem is caused by the player selection; once you've passed control almost immediately switches to the player who should receive the pass, but if my gameplay skills are anything to go by you'll invariably be pushing the joy-pad in some other direction, making the player run away from the ball. Even if you do manage to gain proper control you'll often run straight past the ball anyway. A little more play testing could have easily solved this. It could have also helped fix the pretty dismal player select system. It seems as though the CPU daydreams a little when selecting your player and if you decide to take over manually, by using the triangle button, the results won't be a vast improvement.

The goalkeepers also leave a lot to be desired. At times they work extremely well but on occasion, for absolutely no reason at all they'll make a dreadful mistake allowing the opposition to jump in and score. The mistakes they make, though, are not programmed into the AI, they are most definitely a bug or a gameplay flaw.

Slightly flawed the gameplay may be, but rest assured that the positive aspects far outweigh the minor nagging of the negative.

Nightmare Logistics

Providing a wealth of different kits and team styles would have been a bit of a logistical nightmare for the programming team behind Viva Football so it seems that they've decided to make only minor changes in the overall look of the different teams through the ages. Instead they've committed their graphical prowess to producing what is surely the cleanest and brightest looking soccer game to date. All of the players are well crafted and the animation is second to none. Check out the replays and you'll see the amount of animation frames that have gone into making Viva Football as smooth looking as this.

Of particular note on the graphical front are the various stadiums that you find yourself playing in. EA's virtual stadium technology seems to be very superficial when compared to the atmosphere that the often massive Viva Football stadiums create. This atmosphere is helped by a truly dynamic crowd that really do go with the flow of the game.

There's no commentary though. Instead we get a system called player chat where you actually get to hear the players shouting orders to each other on the pitch. All of the teams speak their native tongue too. The player chat is a little annoying to start off with but it soon infiltrates the background noise and does actually help the big match atmosphere.

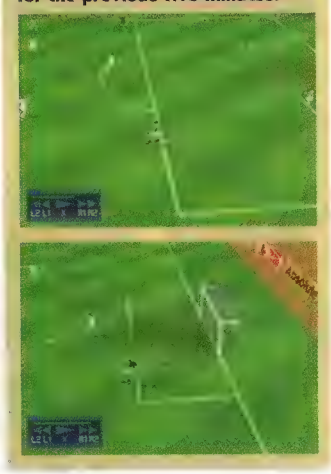
It's Been A Long Time

Viva Football has been a long time coming. It's also been through a few changes since I first played it early last year. It's a shame that the feel of the game itself has been altered since the early code but the finished game has turned out to be something pretty special anyway. The novelty factor gets over the fact that it actually is a novelty and becomes the mainstay of what is already a very playable, and more importantly, enjoyable game of football. The steep learning curve may put some off but the chance to play as any team from the last forty years of the World Cup should be enough to keep most playing.

If it wasn't for a few admittedly minor but antagonistic flaws Viva Football would be assured a Triple AAA award. And there are better playing football games around. Viva Football's theme and execution should, however, be more than enough to please even the most discerning gamer.

Instant Replay

Something about football game replays is that you're rarely given the run up to the goal, just the few seconds before it. Viva Football's replay function gives you a little more time to see the build up through to the goal, allowing you to analyse exactly how the goal came about as well as watching the goal itself. This of course is another way to annoy your mates after faffing around with those poxy goal celebrations for the previous five minutes.



The Competition

FIFA '99 -
Arguably the best PlayStation football game so far

Actua Soccer 3 -
Very fiddly but still a worthy kick-a-bout.

ISS Pro '98
The best arcade footy game ever, but won't please the real fans of the sport

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

A fast flowing and skilful football game that brings back memories for fans of all ages.

+ Crystal clear visuals
+ The retro team format actually works
- Steep learning curve.
- Ridiculous loading time.

OUT OF 100

84

PREMIER MANAGER '99 VS PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98-99

It's the fight of the year and as the struggle for football management supremacy reaches its climax we bring you the exclusive look at the finished code of the two contenders. Only one will emerge victorious, read on...

Premier Manager '99

Publisher: Gremlin

Developer: In-House

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Footie Management

No of Players: 1–4

Price: £34.99

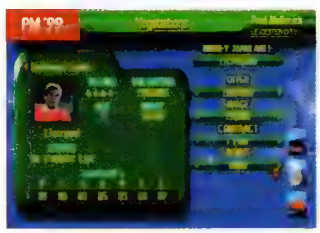
Compatibility

Can you believe it? There you are waiting for ages to play a decent footie management game on your PlayStation – after putting up with two very rushed games (both the predecessors to these two, funnily enough) and then both arrive at the same time. It's that famous bus analogy again.

So here's the review of both of them, together and separately. Now we don't normally do this, but there's a couple of good reasons why we are now. For a start, there's no competition for these games, there are no others of their type available for the PlayStation. We'd never do this to two platforms games for instance – that would be foolish. Another good reason was given before – they are both sequels of flawed or rushed original games.

Secondly, this is going to be a huge market. These games will sell, and having two reviews side by side wouldn't really do them justice. So what we're going to do is have a look at both of them together. To see what they have in common and what makes them different. Both games will still get a rating at the end but you'll have a better idea of which one deserves your

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Now it's time to choose which method of watching your team you're going to use. Feel lucky, punk?; once you get used to the menu system to move around it's not too awkward. Just not very user-friendly really; he's leaning into that header which means it's going to get some distance on it. That's what we pay him for.



MORE ROOMS WITH A VIEW

So you understand what I'm talking about, here's a quick visual rundown on some of the different ways of watching your result unfold. PM 98–99 also offers a textual Commentary View, but it was far too dull to show here.

PREMIER MANAGER '99

PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98–99

money and why. Well, that's the plan, anyway. So let's get going.

Battle Of The Giants

Right, here's how I'm going to do this. Both Premier Manager '99 and Player Manager 98-99 are very similar in structure but have lots of small differences to make them unique. So to test this out, I'm going to play both games as the same team, Leicester City (hey, it's my choice OK?) and see how they handle it.

But first, let's have a quick look at both games. The most high profile of these two is Gremlin's Premier Manager '99. It is, obviously, the follow up to PM '98, which sold quite a lot of copies, but didn't realise outstanding praise, thanks to a few bugs and a rushed feel to the game. Another reason it has a higher profile is thanks to the endorsement of ex-England hero, top TV pundit and Fulham manager, Kevin Keegan. There's also no dodgy footballer-perm to be seen anywhere.

Anco's Player Manager 98-99 doesn't have any big sponsorship deal to spearhead it's PR campaign, but there's no doubting that this is one complicated beast. It also has the added bonus of being able to play in the side you manage. Usefully, you can turn this option off and just play it as a straight management game.

Although there are many visual differences (duh), both games do most things in the same way. There are all the normal league and cup competitions, transfer markets and squad details you could ever want. The games also offer the same kind of options for viewing your team in action.

In PM '99 there are two basic ways to play a match. From the options menu

CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: Training is very important. If you've got a fitness problem with a player, balance out his training with plenty of rest; make some last minute changes, get the result or watch the highlights. From here on in, it's down to your players; it's always worth checking out the other team to see where their weaknesses lie.

Player Manager – Season 98–99

Publisher: Infogrames

Developer: Anco

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Footie Management

No of Players: One

Price: £34.99

Compatibility

TOP FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Plenty of space in midfield, and that's not good. Something I'll have to work on in the training ground there I think; choose which league you want to manage, choose the number of players and, in what could only happen in a videogame, choose to stop to your players ageing. Weird.

First Ten Minutes

PREMIER MANAGER '99

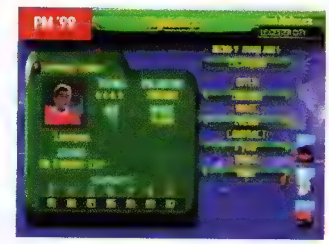
From the excellent menu screen and all the other options that you dive into, you find that it's easy to move around and do what you want to when you want to do it. A great place to start from.

you can decide on the length of the game (up to a maximum of two minutes) and then sit back and watch as the screen updates you with what is happening in the match and fills in boxes such as Shots On Goal and the like. This quick view gives you a very brief indication of what's going on. If you can't be bothered with this, you can make the results instant if you wish.

The real smart part of the game though is reserved for the View Highlights option. You can check out the game before or after you know the result. So if you're not watching every game and just want a quick result, only to find out you annihilated your opponent, you can still watch the match. And watching the game is highly recommended.

Using the game engine from *Actua Soccer* and commentary from Barry Davies, the highlights show off an impressive array of moves and set pieces all capped off with fantastically elaborate and atmospheric comments. And there's loads of them too, in fact in just over two seasons of playing the game was still throwing up ones I hadn't seen before. Very classy and very well executed. The only problem with this is that your watching pre-ordained highlights. There's nothing you can do to influence the result even if you don't know what it is, no substitutions or tactical changes here.

Player Manager 98-99 takes on the idea of different ways to view the action and gives it another spin. Once you've got



The Competition

Premier Manager '98 –

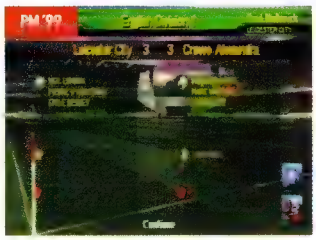
Hurriedly put out on the streets, the game suffers from some bugs and a lack of depth meaning that you can't really do what you want to – kind of essential in the management game.

Player Manager –

This is over two years old now and even when released it looked a little dated. It plays the game OK, but again, there's no real fluidity throughout.

NEED AN EXPLANATION OVER HERE...

Now there's not much I can, or want to say about this, but for some reason, when playing Player Manager 98–99, the game feels the need to slowly tell you every score from every game that day. It doesn't bring up one screen for you to look at, it reveals each one to you like you're watching Grandstand on a Saturday afternoon. Only without the excitement. Or the sound. Here look for yourself.



TOP FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: In a great touch, the game takes account of the season and so sometimes it really rains and other times, like here, someone paints the pitch white on April Fool's Day. Not really, it's just snowing; team training is good for morale and you can work on set pieces and other stuff vital to winning a top-quality match.

to Match Day you are given three choices – Commentary, Highlights and Watch. Each of these has their own benefits.

Choose the Commentary option and you'll get a small bar of text to tell you what's happening and a screen updating you with scores from around the country in your particular division. This is the kind of option best reserved for people happy with the way things are going – not useful for the beginner or when you've just taken over a brand new side.

The next step up from this is the highlights option. This gives you a tiny overhead view of the game (as if from an airship) and options to follow the ball or players. This is the kind of the thing used to refine your system. You can also select highlights to watch whenever you score, for instance.

And the final option is a ten minute (five each half) 3D match for you to view. This isn't broken down into highlights or whatever, it just uses a fast clock, so it's like watching a real game. And with a press of the mouse button you can alter your tactics and sub players enabling you to cover any unforeseen problems and the like.

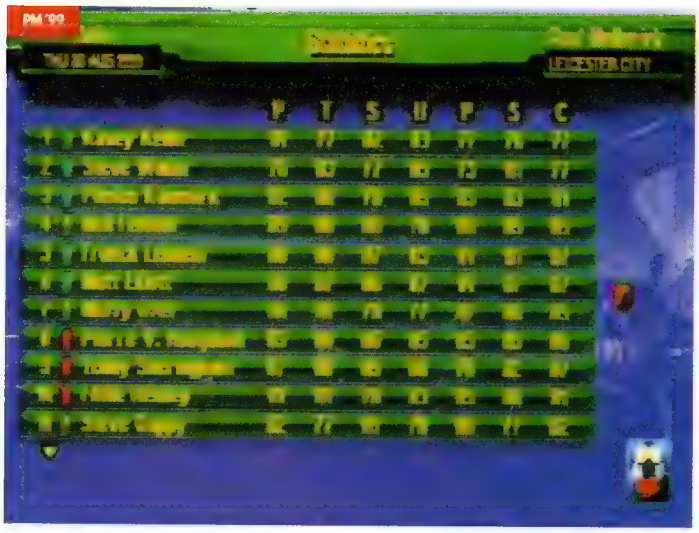
Guts And Glory

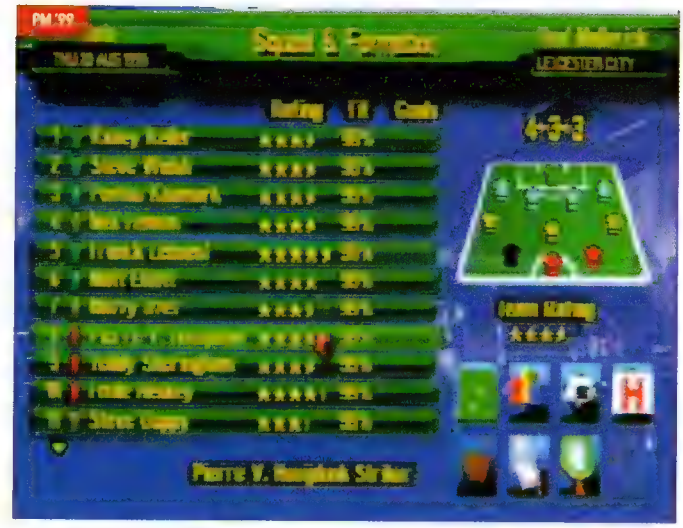
Once you get over the disappointment of not being able to control your players in the 3D world in which you play and realise that these are management games and you're not supposed to, you sit back and appreciate what a good job both games have done with this aspect.

First Ten Minutes

PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98–99

Initially it's very confusing figuring out all the menus and what to click on. Once you start using the menus at the top of the screen it becomes slightly easier, but it's all a bit disconcerting.





CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: And here's your obligatory boring screen. Just a list of figures showing how much your players rate in each particular letter. We don't care about stuff like this, do we?; this is the screen where you'll do most of your work. Training, squad selection, seeing how fit everyone is and all manner of other top managerial decisions.

But football management games are supposed to do a lot more. Personally, you can forget about things like stadium improvements and the like as long as the guts – calculating games, allowing for the occasional upset, working out new players and all that kind of stuff – work properly. And this is where we start to encounter problems. At least with Premier Manager '99 anyway.

Now there's two ways this can't come out sounding – either that I'm a big moany old git who can't play management games (this is not true, I can play them), or that something is a bit wrong with the internal workings of the game. Let me explain.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this review I played both games as Leicester City. Now regardless of your personal feelings about them as a team, the Premier Manager rated them as nearly four stars (five stars being the maximum). On top of that I spent some money on some top quality players to strengthen my squad. I expect it to be tough, but I didn't expect to get relegated. And yet in the same season I got into the FA Cup Final – which I lost.

After a bit of soul searching, and tears at losing yet another Wembley Cup Final, the only suspicion that came to mind was that I had viewed all the games in the FA Cup and merely got instant results for the league; the game seemed to be guilty of judging instant results a bit too randomly. This was confirmed the next season. When playing in Division 1 against teams rated very much lower than Leicester (we're talking twenty points lower), I was beaten in instant results and yet winning when watching the highlights.

OK, so just play the game watching the highlights you might be saying. Well, fine, but that doesn't really solve the problem does it? And it takes about two and half hours to play a season by just clicking on the instant results anyway, so playing every game would take months. No, the game just doesn't feel like it's working the way it should. Either that or I'm just full of sour grapes.

It's... Ju... st... Too... Sl... ow...

So, what about Player Manager 98-99 then? Well, for a start Player Manager 98-99 plays a more obviously statistical game with you when compared with Gremlin's attempt. In fact, it goes a bit mental with all the stats about the players and options to refine what you're looking for in a footballer. I'm not saying this is a bad thing, it just becomes a bit of a chore after a while and then you just ignore most of the features because you don't want to get that involved. And

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Oh, and it's in the back of the net. You'll now get two replays of the goal from different angles and a shot meter showing how far and how fast the passes and shots were. Very cool: hello, and welcome to a tedious screen. This just shows off what the CPU thinks of your performance. To get information out of this would just take too much time.

if you do, you really do need to get out more and interact with people.

Apart from the overwhelming collection of stats, the major hindrance to enjoying the game is speed. Now, I understand that this isn't a game you play for a quick ten minutes fix, but thanks to the amount of flicking between menus (which includes a ludicrously pointless zoom out and back in feature) and the arduously slow in game calculations, it took over an hour to organise and set-up my first match! From there, if you want to search for players, make transfers, play with your tactics and do all the other things you wish for, you're talking maybe ten hours to get through a season.

It would appear that the stats and reality element that the game is so proud of, is the one thing that's really holding back from being a top quality game. Ooh, the irony.

IT'S THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

So what else is there to say? Well, from looking around these pages you'll see that Premier Manager '99 wins hands down when it comes to looks. With those big, bold and bright icons everything comes easily to the hand and then the eye – regardless of whether you're using a normal pad or a mouse, which both games allow.

But what I've tried to get across is the way in which the games encourage and reward your playing. Premier Manager '99, for want of a better expression, offers a more instant or arcade sensation against the stats-based but sloth-like approach of Player Manager 98-99. It's worth pointing out that both games do the job they're supposed to just in different ways, and neither is without flaw

I'm falling down on the side of Premier Manager '99 in this particular clash of management games, but not without reservations. The game is packed full of entertaining presentation and almost worth the price alone for the highlight section and beautifully crafted commentary, but I am still concerned about the more purposeful player who might be disappointed when things go against him/her more often than they should.

And my favouritism for PM '99 doesn't mean that Player Manager 98-99 should be discounted out of hand. It's a lot slicker looking that the early version we were going to preview until this review came in and the amount of stats is impressive. Oh, and don't forget all those viewing options for what ever stage of management you're at. It's a real shame the damn thing is so bloody slow.

In fact, the real shame is that both games could have been perfect and different interpretations of how to do a football management sim. But both managed to shoot themselves in the foot a little. Ah well, c'est la vie.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

PREMIER MANAGER '99

STATION

Almost a great football management game, this still provides a lot of fun.

+ Superb highlights option with even better commentary.
+ Easy to use and very quick menu and option system.
- Seems slightly illogical at times. Captain.
- The highlights seem to disregard playing in position.

OUT OF 100

80

PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98–99

STATION

Slow to the point of tedium, this rescues itself by being well-rounded and full of stats.

+ Overflowing with stats. And then more stats.
+ Great options to watch the game with.
- It takes almost an hour to set up your first game.
- A confusing control system and no sound at all.

OUT OF 100

69

MAX POWER RACING

With *Gran Turismo* and *TOCA2*, all track racers are catered for. So what do you do? Max Power Racing takes road cars and throws them off the high speed circuits. STATION takes it for a spin.

Max Power Racing

Publisher: Infogrames

Developer: Eutechnyx

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Racing

No of Players: 1–2 Split Screen

Price: £39.99

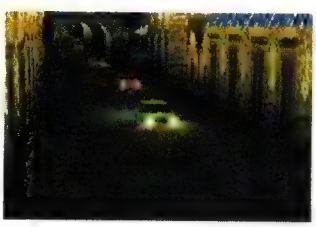
First Ten Minutes

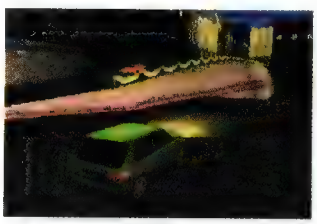
Split screen action straight off means only having the choice of two cars, but what the hey? The car graphics could be better but most cars are recognisable and the Skoda handles as you would expect it to until you set it up for your own style of driving.

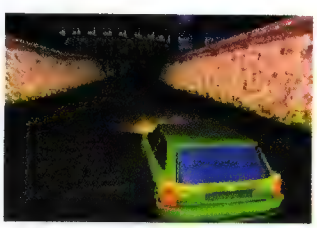
Compatibility

The ass-churning crunch of twisted metal is not a sound that you would normally associate with Grand Prix racing. Those cars are built from carbon fibre and so ripping and splintering sounds would be the call of the day. However it's a sad fact that both of these sounds still seem to missing from almost every racing title out today. Max Power Racing is missing it too and this small point also serves to indicate the small, niggly things that make this game fall short of excellent.

With Max Power, we have a game that take us around the world to some rather brilliantly thought out tracks and puts the driver behind the wheel of over 40







ABOVE SEQUENCE: Ususally, the third stage in a country is a night time stage. Here the headlights pick out the streets of Rome.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Lots of natural hazards pop up in Max Power Racing. When you're not trying to avoid rivers, there are still huge ravines that are very unforgiving should you push your Peugot that little bit too far; your whole race can be replayed to you once you finish. Here I am trying to gently persuade some local poseur to get out of my way at night in Monaco.

different cars, from a Skoda to a Marcos. You only start off with two cars to choose from though, and a lowly couple of tracks with which to prove your mettle. You must win races in order to try out all of the other cars and tracks – whether you are playing in championship mode on your own or in two player split screen arcade mode with a friend. Once out on the starting grid, you can see that the actual design of the tracks, with trees, rocks, city streets tunnels, bridges, rivers and the like has been well thought out to add interest. Therefore it's a bit of pity that the same attention has not been paid to the car graphics. Most cars do look like the real world metal monsters that they are trying to portray – however the lack of. fine detail in the bodywork and paucity of visual damage to wings etc. is a distracting omission.

Nonetheless, the game has nice touches. The tracks have plenty of jumps and there always seems to be short 'alternatives' around most routes, the odd nasty turn can send you quickly to a watery grave too. Oh yes. The realism is quite good in this respect – when you crash your cars on the track, they seem unstoppable. But drive your Toyota MR2 into a river and it's game over for good! This makes racing to the max far more exciting – push it too hard and lose it on a river bank and it's a wet finish all round, with you having to start the race again or go back to your last saved position

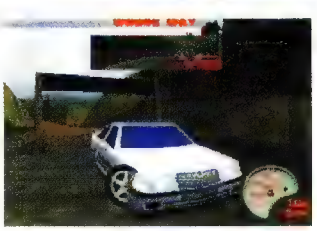
Winning races allows access to new courses; the China tracks are fast, whilst the UK tracks wind up hill and down dale with some very pretty landscapes boasting waterfalls and rickety bridges – there's even an off-road section that is tortuously twisty and narrow. Car selection gets better as you progress and your rides steadily increase in power. Attention to the car set up also becomes vital as you move further into the game, especially if you are racing on a slippery surface!

As tracks improve, so does the gameplay with better impressions of speed. But still remains that feeling that something is missing as soon as you compare the game with *TOCA 2* or *Gran Turismo*. The game doesn't deserve to be so obviously compared, however, as it brings a kind of rawness to the proceedings that is not unpleasant. Being buzzed by an aeroplane in one section was a nice touch, but more reminiscent of that other Infogrames title *V-Rally*, which seems to have been more than a passing inspiration for the gameplay

You really have to admire anyone that brings out a 3D racing game these days in the face of the stiff competition being fielded by Sony or Codemasters. So it really is with some difficulty that we have to finally admit that Max Power Racing offers a good alternative to the definitive *Gran Turismo*, but in the final line up, it stops short of the mark on both graphics and content, just failing to make it onto the grid to contest a place in the grand final. Having said that, if you're already one of the two million owners of *Gran Turismo* who would like to try something slightly different, it may still prove worthwhile to take it out for a spin.

Living In A Box?

The main drawback to Max Power Racing is with the car detail, with 'boxy' being the most appropriate word. 'Plain' could also find some print space if we're honest. Mind you, it's still quite a laugh putting them through the motions and getting some air time.



The Competition

Gran Turismo –

Solidly stuck in pole position, it looks like nothing will be able to get past the UKs biggest selling game of 1998. It is still the best.

TOCA 2 –

Codemaster's updated epic is fast, furious and highly playable and has excellent graphics.

Rated by Gary Powers

STATION

Takes a flying leap at Gran Turismo, but falls a little short of the mark.

+	A good selection of varied and well laid out tracks.
+	A variety of 'everyday' cars, all fully customisable.
-	Analog control could be much better.
-	Graphics don't allow damage to be done.

OUT OF 100

89

TIGER WOODS '99: PGA TOUR GOLF

He's young, he's American and he's the new hip golfing professional. Now, thanks to the wonder of motion capture, you can look and play like a Tiger without leaving your chair.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Swinging the camera angle around as the ball comes to a stop is such a good idea. Here Tiger looks on concerned; here's Tiger auditioning for a part in the audience of the next Ricki Lake show. Go Ricki, go Ricki...

Tiger Woods '99: PGA Tour Golf

Publisher: Electronic Arts

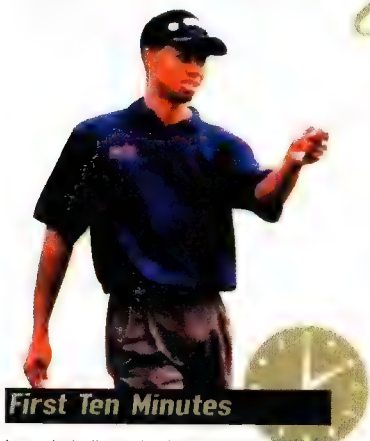
Developer: EA Sports

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Golfing Sim

No of Players: 1-4

Price: £39.99



First Ten Minutes

It may look all-new, but it's got that ring of PGA-familiarity about it. And before you know it you're knocking 300 yard drives down the fairway like you've been doing it all your life. Easy.

Compatibility

Hype! There's loads of it around these days, and to get anywhere in the world you're gonna need to know how to use it. Tiger Woods, within a couple of years of turning professional, was the biggest golfing star ever. He's young, and he's sponsored by Nike.

So, almost inevitably he was going to end up lending his name, and thanks to the miracle of science, his image, to a video game. As luck would have it, he signed up with EA and put his fizog and more onto the best golf game around, PGA Tour Golf.

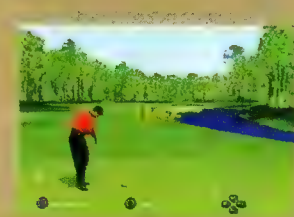
It Went Straight Down The Middle

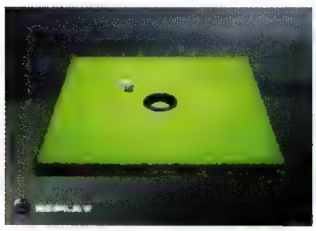
For years golf has a been a very strange videogaming occurrence. We all know people who either dislike, hate or are completely indifferent to golf and yet, *everyone* loves being able to play a round or two on their console or whatever. It's strange because very few people feel the same way about Synchronised Swimming, for instance.

But I digress, I'm here to tell you about Tiger Woods '99. Only to be honest, there's not much I'm going to tell you that you won't already know, or indeed, care about. And that's because in almost every other review of a golf game you've ever read – and you're

IT'S IN THE WAY YOU MOVE

Never ones to miss a trick, EA have decided to tweak around the control system for Tiger Woods '99, and if you've got an analog pad you can experience the fun for yourself. All you have to is pull down on the pad to start your backswing, then push the pad up and the game works out the power of the shot and the accuracy of your swing. This isn't the most decisive way of playing the game, but it's a nice option to have.



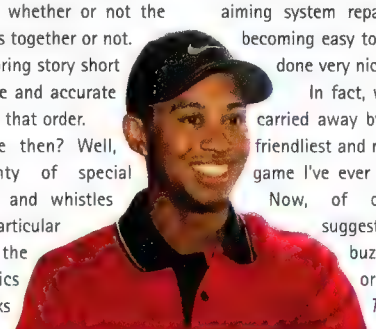


BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: He's a bit pleased with the Birdie, and he'll probably have some comment to make on it as well. But you can't hear that by looking at the screenshot. Sorry; as you can see from this 'follow-the-ball' shot, there's plenty of lush graphics and they move really smoothly as well.

bound to have come across at least one – you'll have heard about the number of courses you can play on, the good and bad merits of the control system and then, finally, whether or not the whole thing hangs together or not.

So to cut a boring story short – five, easy to use and accurate and a big yes – in that order.

So what else then? Well, there are plenty of special PlayStation bells and whistles added onto this particular version, from the explosive graphics as Tiger overcooks a shot to send it 20 or 30 extra yards down the fairway, to being 'in the zone' – the effect achieved when, after playing well for a few holes in a row, the aiming system repays your effort by becoming easy to gauge. And it's all done very nicely, thank you.



In fact, without wishing to carried away by it all, this is the friendliest and most enjoyable golf game I've ever laid my hands on. Now, of course, I'm not suggesting that its got the buzz of playing *TOCA 2* or the intrigue of *Tomb Raider III*, but it does draw you in bit by bit, and when you start shouting to people to come and look at your 320 yard drive or the beautifully chipped in shot from off the green, then you kind of think that the game is doing something right.

Ouch! My Ears

Heck, even when you win a tournament or something, instead of the usual boring 'winner' screen, you're treated to a pumping video montage of Tiger celebrating. It's a cheap and easy shot at making you feel involved, but boy, does it work.

And as well as all of this, you've got the various types of game to choose from, seven other golfing professionals lovingly captured to play as/with/against and even the horribly out-of-place rambling dance music (with really poor imitations of Chemical Bros. and Crystal Method tunes) can be turned off in favour of more realistic and pleasant bird-tweeting.

All in all then, the most complete, easy to play and enjoyable golf game I've ever seen. And I've seen quite a few in my time, let me tell you...

The Competition

Actua Golf 3 –
A much hailed new control method it may have, but it looks distinctly old hat when compared to Tiger's new clothes. Good, but already out-dated.

Everybody's Golf –
A different type of golf game for those among us who don't want take things too seriously. Are you an arcade man or a simulation man?

PGA Tour Golf –
There have been various versions of this cracking little game for years now, they're all very nice in their own way but they're starting to show their age.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

STATION	+ Play as an idiosyncratic motion-captured Tiger Woods. + Options galore to tweak to your hearts' content.	OUT OF 100
Simply the best golf game to play around with.	- Initially difficult putting might scare some off. - Probably not worthwhile if you own other golf games.	91

BLOODSPORT

There are some games that you play as a child because you've got very little choice in the matter. As you get older you get more choices, here's a chance to exercise your rights.

Bloodsport

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Radical Ent.

Release Date: March

Game Type: Future Sport Sim

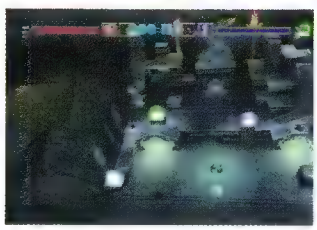
No of Players: 1-4

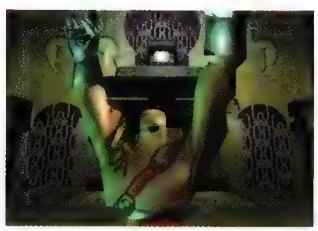
Price: £34.99

First Ten Minutes

Grrr! Whose idea was this? This is a pointless game of tag. And the agony is compounded thanks to a seemingly ridiculous set of rules. There's no fun to be had, just plenty of frustration.

Compatibility





God damn it! There are some games that reach a level of frustration you never thought possible. You could just turn the damn thing off and walk away. Unfortunately, I have to play these things to form an opinion. So I broke a joypad instead.

Before I start I'd better clear up something, a couple of issues ago (No two to be precise), we covered this game in our Unfinished Business section. Back then it was called *Tribal*. We're not privy to the reasons for the name change, that's just the way it is.

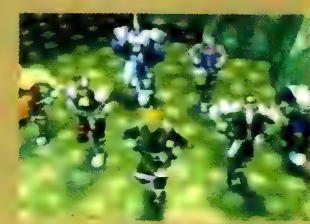
What's With The Future?

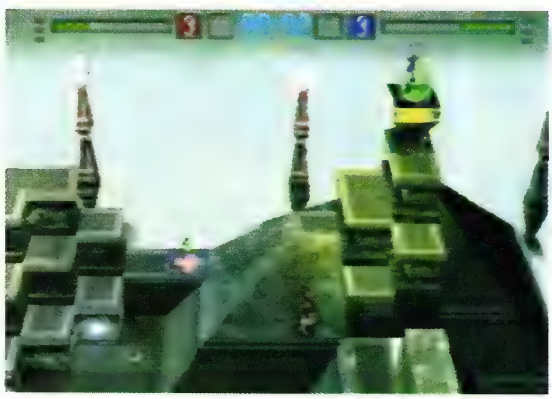
Now that we've got that out of the way, we can deal with playing another in a long line of future sport sims. If you've got an idea for a game and you fancy putting it down on a CD, you've got to give it a reason for existing. You usually accomplish this by making up some futuristic and/or apocalyptic plot and then throw in some technologically advanced characters and explosive power-ups and let them go for it.

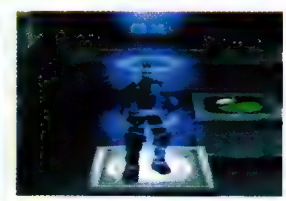
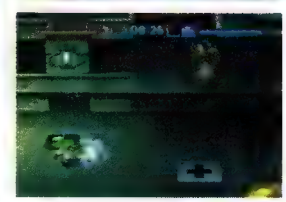
LEFT TO RIGHT: If luck is on your side, you can sometimes complete a level in a fast time – and the game will tell you how excellent you are; the blue guy with a slight glow around him is 'it' and he's just collected 'it' from the other guy.

LET'S DANCE. AND FIGHT.

For some inexplicable reason, the intro sequence varies from a full-on fist fight into a Five/Boyzone choreographed dance-fest. If you don't believe me here's the screens. See.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Nice view from up there, unfortunately you can't stay around too long admiring the scenery, there's more beacons to alter; as well a small picture of each character you get a big one too. I've never been able to figure out why games do this; conquer the other character and the game will close up on you and watch as you pose and look all smug in your victory; the best time to make a move is after an especially good throw or punch has pushed your opponent far away.

In this particular sport sim, you must change the colour of the beacons on each level before your opponent does. The snag being that only one person has the ability to change their colour and to gain that ability you need to attack the other character. Well, when I say attack, all you need to do is touch them and the game fills in the rest – using a variety of punches, throws and kicks. It's the futuristic version of tag.

You don't need to change all of the beacons on a level, just the majority of them. Do that and you've won the level. Win the level three times (or five if you like it harder) and you move onto the next location and character.

Ah, the characters. Plenty of odd people here. They're all very patriotic and represent their particular nation states in this tournament. Only in the future places like Scotland have been renamed Scotia. Yes, I thought that as well.

My, What A Let Down.

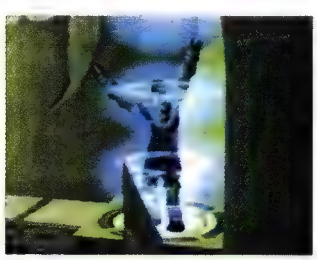
And that's pretty much all the game has to offer. I appreciate all the options given to you – from playing against a friend right through to a four-player frenzy – but the game is so seriously flawed, I'm really not going to bother with them.

As an idea for a sport sim, it's a good one. It's really the execution that lets it down, unfortunately in several areas. For a start, each time you play, your opponent already has the ability to change the beacons, meaning your first and only tactic is to try and get them. Why this is so is never explained.

And once you're in the game, things don't get better. The game camera zooms in and out in order to show you where both characters are, and as the game is fast-moving it does this at quite a rate. The problem is that as the camera zooms around, you're still jumping all over the place. This unfortunately means that you are unsure as to how much pressure to apply on the pad to make the jump or move around without getting caught.

And as if that wasn't enough, the special powers are practically useless against anyone as they can see them coming and get out of the way. Then you've got to take into account the absurdly repetitive gameplay and the childlike taunts and celebrations that just seem pointless. The list goes on.

I could go on like this for at least three more pages, but that wouldn't accomplish anything. Instead I'm going to try and forget I ever played this and see if I can fix that joypad.



LEFT TO RIGHT: 'And once again victory is mine, so I'll stand here and strike a pose'; green is the neutral colour of the beacons, whereas you turn them a beautiful glowing orange colour. Ahh, nice.

The Competition

Dead Ball Zone –
Top class future sport sim, that relies more on the sport angle than the future angle.

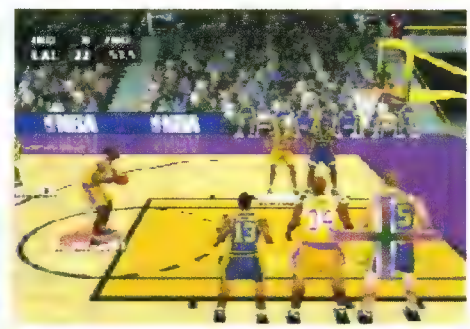
Dodgem Arena –
Uses the future sport angle as an excuse to throw powerful hover craft around a course in an attempt score points. As fun as it is ridiculous. That's a lot.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

STATION	+ Good 3D game engine. + OK two player mode.	OUT OF 100
An updated playground game. With none of the fun.	- Pointless and unresponsive gameplay. - Intermittent clash between controls and 3D view.	45

NBA LIVE '99

The world of basketball is full of superstars, hard-court action, women in small outfits waving pom-poms and tall people. So just how much of it can you cram onto a CD and play around with in your living room? Read on, and find out.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Well, it looks like the LA Lakers are running away with it, but then you try to stop a 7ft 1in, 330lbs man named Shaq; get close to the basket, or 'in the paint', and you can dunk with ease; the free-throw is where you can score vital points, line up the ball to the centre of the T-bar and you're away.

NBA Live '99

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: EA Sports

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Basketball Sim

No of Players: 1-4

Price: £39.99

Show me the money!

Because to be honest, that's what it's all about. Did you know that the minimum salary for a player in the NBA is $365,000 per year. That's about £225,000. Cool huh? You get to play the game you love (otherwise you wouldn't be doing it) and earn loads of money. Well, actually, if we're talking money, then Michael Jordan really rules the roost because he gets $440,000 (£275,000). Per game. And there are 82 games in a regular season.

For those of you who can't be bothered to work it out, that's £36,000,000 a year. And if he's a bit strapped for cash, he can top that up with endorsements and the like.

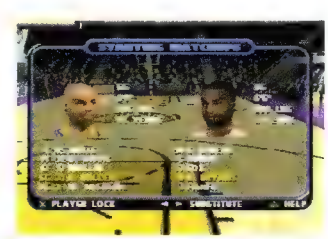
What, you may well ask, the hell does this have to do with the computer game? The reason I'm telling you all this is because NBA Live '99 takes it upon itself to deliver everything it possibly can about the world of basketball – we are talking serious attention to detail. There is a simple straight-to-the-court arcade mode, but it's the simulation where everything starts to shine and the most fun is to be had.

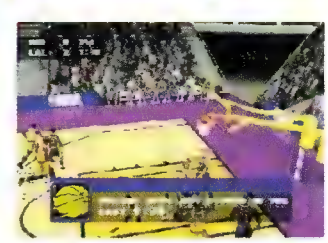
Every option you can think of is here. There's everything from a full NBA draft (to pick your players from) to injuries and fatigue. But, you were right earlier, it's how the game plays that's the important thing, right? Exactly.

And after watching the well-produced intro, and after enjoying the MTV style half-time show and even after making my way through the play-offs, I'm left kind of dazed by it all.

First Ten Minutes

Thanks to the quick start option, within seconds you're on the court and playing. And for the first game everything goes swimmingly. Passing is crisp and dunks and lay-ups are easy to master. This looks like it's going to fun from here on in.





CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: Relive those fantastic dunks, and rub your mates' noses in it with the ever-useful replay option; if you're not happy with your starting line-up, then simply change the position you don't like much; the game brings up information as if you were watching the TV, it's pointless but nonetheless very entertaining.

Compatibility

TAKE A BREAK... IT'S HALF TIME

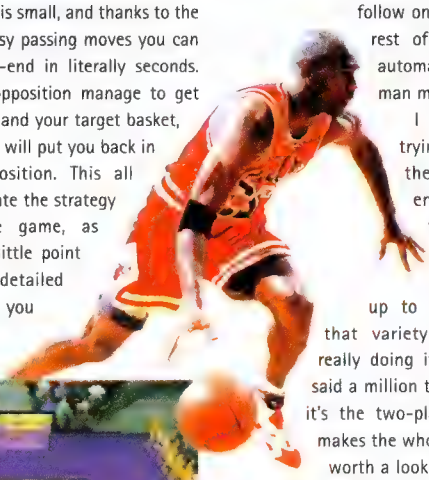
As most people will tell you, when it's half-time in almost any sport in the US, it's time to bring on the entertainment. Or girls as they are more often called over here. And not one to break with tradition NBA Live '99 treats us to several different 'shows', all in lovely full-motion video along with pap soundtrack. It's amusing for the first couple of times. And then it isn't. But here's a few stills to er, look at.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: It looks like it's all Lakers at half-time, but you never know what the second half has in store: while the teams are taking a break lets get a quick look at some action from other games: and lets also take a quick look at the United Center to see how the Chicago Bulls are shaping up today, not bad.

It's a fun game to play, certainly. It moves along well, definitely. There's plenty of easy to pull off moves and dunks, and within a few hours of starting, you're crowned champions and it's time to move onto the next, and genuinely, harder level.

But there's just that little something missing. A kind of X-factor. There's no real spark to the playing the game, you just figure out the moves, wander up and down the court, dunk spectacularly and then do it all over again.

The court is small, and thanks to the speed and easy passing moves you can move end-to-end in literally seconds. Should the opposition manage to get between you and your target basket, a pass or two will put you back in a scoring position. This all tends to negate the strategy side of the game, as there's very little point setting up detailed tactics when you can simply follow one player and the rest of the team will automatically man-to-man mark the others.



I guess what I'm trying to say is that there is just not enough intrinsic variety to the game; and if the game leaves it up to you to provide that variety then it's not really doing its job. It's been said a million times before, but it's the two-player mode that makes the whole thing at least worth a look.

If you've got a mad keen b-ball fan as a best friend, and he's a bit unpredictable with the joypad (and I don't mean that he plays with the pad behind his head or something), then you'll enjoy the sheer scale of the game and get a real buzz out of it.

In fact you'll get a buzz out of the single player game as well, it just won't last as long and will leave you feeling a tad empty on the inside. G

ABOVE: There are all sorts of stats and options for you to look at and ponder over. Here you can see which positions you scored from and where you stood when you shot and missed. Useful, in an anal sort of way.

The Competition

Total NBA '97 -
Without a doubt the best simulation of the game ever produced and also a top game to play. It looks fantastic and offers all the pace, action and strategy you could ever want.

World League Basketball -
Not too bad, but then not too good either. This is one of those games that the word average was invented for.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

STATION

A well polished, stat-heavy basketball sim that's just a little empty on the gameplay side.

+ More stats and realism than any other sport sim.
+ Lots of cool moves and dunks.
- Speedy gameplay ruins any strategy element.
- Missing that vital X-factor.

OUT OF 100

72

MONKEY

Show me the monkey! Or in this case, guide the monkey through many perils in an attempt to defeat the world of nightmares. This could only ever happen in a videogame...

Monkey Hero

Publisher: Take 2

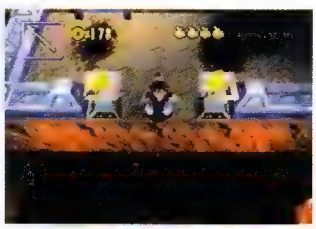
Developer: Blam

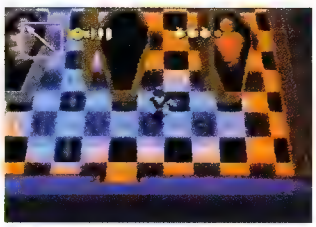
Release Date: January

Game Type: RPG

No of Players: One

Price: £39.99





CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: Skillfully swing your huge bamboo staff around to despatch the various, and frankly quite odd, bad guys you come across; you can die in this game. Thankfully though, you don't suffer from vertigo; the more gruesome players amongst you will be pleased to know that you can open all the coffins. Nothing happens though.

First Ten Minutes

Thanks to the overwhelming cuteness – from the Japanese music to the cartoon scenery – the initial atmosphere is that of a platformer, which draws you in. Then you start to get involved.

Ah, the wonder of nature!

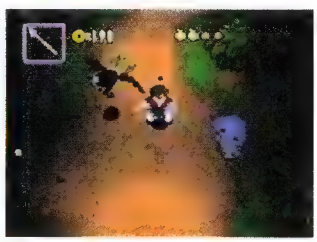
When playing this game not only do you have to contend with the inexplicable, like a talking monkey, but you also get to encounter the downright hilarious, such as armless little creatures called Fontunes. Well, I think small creatures with no arms are funny, anyway!

All this weirdness means that if you're going to get anything out of this game, a small suspension of disbelief is definitely required. Or at the very least a healthy sense of contact with the inner child.

You'll need to grasp the innocence of childhood firmly because this is a simple game. Finishing it is not going to be simple, or indeed take a short amount of time thanks to the huge scale, but playing and explaining is not a difficult task. It sits nicely in the role-playing genre, but don't be scared off by the thought of hit points and turn-based fighting, this is much more simplistic and therefore quite good fun.

The whole ridiculous plot places you, as Monkey Hero, traveling around Monkey World and aiming to defeat the Nightmare King. Walk from village to village or area to area, talk to people, learn new skills, destroy little enemies that you come across, find and use magic, pick up objects and solve puzzles. You know, the usual kind of stuff.

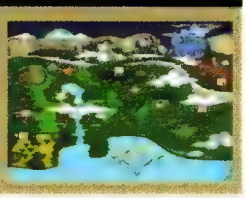
There's nothing too complex puzzle-wise, simply collect the right objects and give them to the right people. From my general tone you'd be forgiven for thinking that this is a great game; in fact it's just a good game which, had it been released about five years ago, I'd have loved. The characters, the size, the general playability would have convinced me of genius.



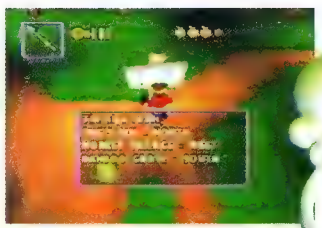
Compatibility

WELCOME TO MONKEY WORLD

As you can see from this cobbled-together screenshot, Monkey World is quite a large place. Thankfully, all the places you need to visit in order to finish the game are highlighted on the map, so you'll know where to go. But you've still got to figure out what to do when you get there.



MONKEY HERO



CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: Do you see what I mean about the games' cute overload? When was the last time you saw trees that looked like that?; the game even helps you out if you get slightly lost because there are signposts everywhere. Handy but repetitve; I've seen plenty of big statues in my time, but I've never seen a Fat Statue. Still, it's his call...

The problem is that now, games like this just look quaint if they're done well and badly dated if they're not – thankfully this falls into the former category. It is, however, difficult to see where this game is going to find a niche among the very best titles the PlayStation has to offer. Experienced *FFVII* players will almost dismiss it out of hand as some sort of child's game, but I'm not sure that 'the kids' are going to get it either.

The simple fact of the matter is that I enjoyed playing the game. It has a charm about it that encourages you to play around. It's also structured so that if you do your job properly and search every nook and cranny, you don't end up wandering around the enormous playing area looking for the right place or opportunity to use the objects you've picked up.

And thanks to the constant flow of enemies, becoming more difficult as you go along, you can't just sit back, relax and just use the pad to wander around without paying attention.

But neither can you escape the fact that it's old fashioned, regardless of how much detail and cute appeal has gone into it. Imagine if *Tomb Raider III* was the same size and had the same controls and enemies as the original *Tomb Raider* – you'd be very disappointed and rightly so.

Monkey Hero doesn't offer anything new in terms of gaming and relies too much on either the way looks or the nostalgic way it plays. It almost pulls it off. Almost.

ABOVE: Sandy's in the tent, sleeping, and her brother won't let you in. It's always the same with big brothers, they never let you have any fun.

The Competition

Final Fantasy VII -

OK, so we're talking a completely different class of game, but they are both RPGs. This is the pick of the bunch with more depth and character than almost any other game ever.

Broken Sword -

A more traditional kind of role-playing game, you point-and-click your way around the screen to solve you mission. Much more interesting than it sounds.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

STATION

Cute and engaging, the game suffers slightly from its dated gameplay and simple format.

+ Easy to pick up and play.
+ A huge gaming area.
- A tad repetitive and old in terms of gameplay.
- Maybe just too cute for the older or more cynical folks.

OUT OF 100

71

SENSIBLE SOCCER: EURO CLUB EDITION

If there is such a thing as the folklore of computer games, there's just one football game that stands out from the rest. Forget about graphics and just concentrate on the best and most enjoyable way to play the game.

Sensible Soccer: Euro Club Edition

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Krisalis

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Football Sim

No of Players: 1-4

Price: £34.99

Here we go again, right?

Another one of those dull football games about to hit an already overcrowded market. Well, yes, it's true there are a lot of football games out there, but this is a bit different.

For years anyone who played games knew who Sensible Software were. They'd created a football game (amongst others), that over many years and many formats had built a rather strange reputation for itself. It concentrated on the way the game played rather than filling it with fancy graphics. And for years afterwards whenever you read about the debate between the way it plays and the way it looks, *Sensible Soccer* was always talked about as the pinnacle of gameplay.

First Ten Minutes

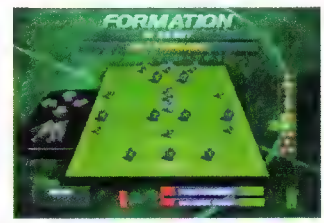
Straight into the game and the classic *Sensible Soccer* overhead view is back. Unfortunately, that's the only connection with the old *Sensible Soccer*. The animation is jerky in places, there's no coherent passing ability and it's all a mess. Maybe it will get better as I get used to it, I think to myself.

Compatibility

THERE ARE THREE SIDES TO EVERY STORY

As well as the classic *Sensible Soccer* overhead viewpoint (from way above the players), this new version adds a couple of new outlooks for those who like to play their games in a different kind of way.

BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: There are options to tweak almost every aspect of the game, here I'm setting up my own cup competition called the Mellers Cup; a great goal from the Scotland forward puts them 4-0 against Brazil. Highly realistic don't you think?; once you've decided on the formation you want to play, you can tweak it by moving the players around one by one; It's a goal mouth scramble! But it looks like the guy in red is in the clear and can slot it into the corner. He did, by the way.



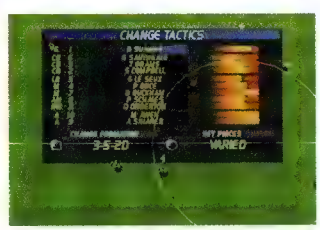
It's All Gone Horribly Wrong

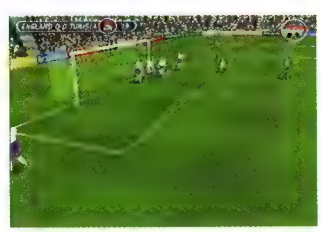
From here on in though, it all goes a bit iffy. In fact, travesty would be a better word. Regardless of which reference you judge this game from – either as a version of *Sensible Soccer* or as a game to compared to likes of *FIFA '99* and *ISS Pro '98* - it just doesn't cut the mustard.

But where to start? For me the first element of a great football game is the passing. The ability to accurately stroke the ball along the ground or through the air and have it land where you intended it too. Sensible Soccer: Euro Club Edition doesn't do this. The one button control system (yes, just the one button – but I'll get to that later) gives you no control over the pace or flight of the ball, giving you that playground hit-and-hope feel.

And it continues in the same vein, a catalogue of errors and disasters. The tackling is laughable, and according to the size of the pitch, sees you jumping around five feet with your legs outstretched and only fate to decide if you get the ball or not. Dribbling and running are almost impossible because you can't avoid tackles, so you end up running in a zig-zag pattern to try and confuse the opposition.

And then, if you do finally manage to get yourself in front of the goal, the same one button problem with the passing takes over as you try and shoot into the net. You can score, but this has more to do with the ineptitude of the goalkeepers than anything else.





Just The One, Dear

Why the one-button system though? Traditionally, yes, the game used one button, and it worked well enough. But the PlayStation control pad has four easy-to-use buttons that games I've already mentioned use very effectively. Tradition for the sake of it is a blind and stupid move.

Now any of these problems on their own might not actually make the game that bad, but I'm not finished yet. The graphics are glitchy and jerk around randomly and the player detail, when viewed from either of the other two camera angles (a TV view and a looking down the pitch perspective) looks unfinished and seems to me to have been rushed.

Yes, there are plenty of options and teams to play as, and the custom teams provide a nice touch of comedy, but all these are peripheral to the game, which is, to be blunt, diabolical.

Regardless of the heritage and reputation that comes with this game, you owe it to yourself to be a harsher judge of character. That would be the sensible thing to do.

The Competition

FIFA '99 -
Fantastic looking and equally great to play footie game. Although featuring all the options you could ever want, it's the crisp and fluid gameplay that really makes this arguably the best football game you can buy.

ISS Pro '98 -
A serious contender for the best football game crown, ISS has a slightly more arcadey look and feel about it, but doesn't sacrifice any playability. With a great control system and real speed, this gives your heart a real work out, especially in two player mode.

Libero Grande -
For the more individual player, this unique idea – playing as one player on the pitch during a match – offers that something different and plays quite a mean game as well.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

STATION
An inept control system and unfinished look destroy any fun to be had from this.

+	Plenty of competitions and teams to choose from.
+	The intro sequence is quite good.
-	A dismally poor control system.
-	Terrible animation and an unfinished look to everything.

OUT OF 100
39

BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING

There is a new sport on the block and the football fans are positively quaking in their boots!! Behold the high octane, action-packed world of... Ten Pin Bowling!

Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling

Publisher: THQ

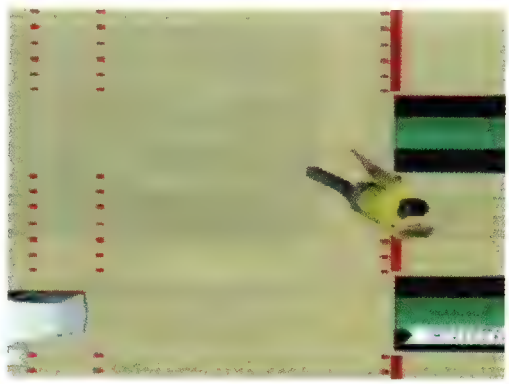
Developer: In-House

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Bowling Sim

No of Players: 1-6

Price: £19.99



LEFT TO RIGHT: As you perform your shots the camera angles change several times. You even get the chance to look for your player's bald spot; the grid on the left is a plan view of the alley. the line is the direction your ball will take.

First Ten Minutes

As first impressions go, this gives quite a good one. The intro treats you to some large pro bowlers with hideous mustaches, and the game isn't too bad either. So far so good...

The Competition

Ten Pin Alley -

More of the same but slightly more refined. This will only appeal to hard-core fans of the sport, but there is more skill involved and a lot more fun to be had.

Compatibility

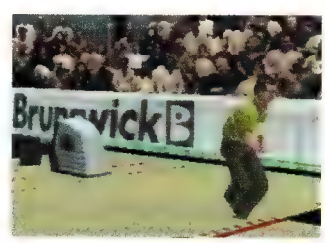
Bowling?? Why am I bothering with a game based on this sport? It must be one of the most uninteresting leisure pursuits known to man. You choose yourself a large, heavy ball and roll it down a long, wooden alley. The idea is to knock over a few plastic skittles and then... pick them up and do it all again! Where's the fun in that? If there *is* a game in the modern western culture duller than ten pin bowling, it has to be videogame ten pin bowling. In the same manner as the oddly popular pastime, you have to perform the tiresome ball-rolling routine – only this time at home with far fewer people to talk to.

Knock the skittles down in no more than two shots and do it again another nine times... Great!

Strike A Light

As one would expect from a sport with such a basic skill necessity, the videogame version is a very limited affair. Pointing fluorescent lines at the pins and controlling an effortless power bar are about the only demanding tests you are faced with. There are various colours of ball for you to roll and each button on the pad is usable, but action-packed is not a term to be thrown in this direction. Side-steps and spin control are about the only special moves one has at hand – and they're not much use when aiming a ball down a channel that is barely 3' wide.

With a variety of different game styles such as exhibition matches, tournaments and even a career mode there is a little interest in here. You can even create and customise your own player which could be a game in itself, but all of this is let down by the poorly inept bowling section which largely ruins any preceding frolics you have with it. If there is a major plus point though, it must be the six strong multiplayer game. You all play individually against one another, and it can be a hoot after twelve pints of ale and a chicken madras from Mr Patel's 'Palace of Naan'; but if you have five other mates to play with then you probably wouldn't have even thought about buying this in the first place. S



Rated by Neil Anpray

STATION		OUT OF 100
What's the point of a game based on a dull sport? Starts OK, but quickly gets tedious.	+ Six player mode can be a laugh after a few beers. + One of only two titles to cater for fans of the sport. - It becomes a little bit dull after just one round. - Surely other sports are more fun.	72

NICKELODEON
Coming
out
to play
soon
PlayStation
THQ

X GAMES PR

All the thrills and spills of the trendiest sport in the world without the risk of injury, or your extremities getting so cold that they have to be surgically removed in a bid to save your life. Is X Games Pro Boarders any good though?

X Games Pro Boarders

Publisher: Sony

Developer: ESPN Digital Games

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Winter Sports

No of Players: 1-2

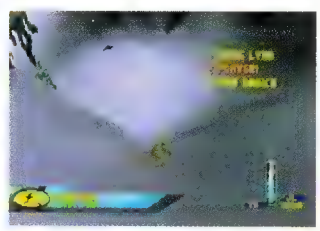
Price: £39.99

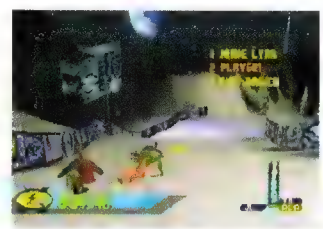
Some people have a natural aversion to the cold, whereas other, more carefree spirits relish the thought of spending a day on the side of a mountain in sub zero temperatures. It's not just the cold though, snowboarding presents other dangers. Broken limbs, snow blindness, and wind burn though are nothing compared to every snowboarder's worst nightmare – meeting a chalet girl. Still if you choose to go snowboarding in the comfort of your own home with X Games Pro Boarders there's no chance of meeting a pissed up, over privileged public school bimbo in Raybans is there?

Cash In Connection

Sony, having already released *CoolBoarders 3* in the early part of the winter now bring us their second snowboarding game of the season. X Games Pro Boarders isn't simply a cash-in on their massively successful *CoolBoarders* games though. In fact apart from the sport it faithfully replicates the two games have almost nothing in common.

For a start the whole feel of X Games Pro Boarders is far removed from that of the arcadey *CoolBoarders*. Although not entirely a snowboard simulation, X Games Pro Boarders does feel slightly more realistic. This however, is not





First Ten Minutes

Being a huge fan of the *CoolBoarders* series I was a little dubious at first, feeling that Sony are just cashing in on their own snowbound success. After a few minutes you realise that X Games is a whole different kettle of tuna. The question instead becomes – Is it for the better?

HIGH JUMP

Snowboarding is as much about getting big air as it is about getting the quickest time down the side of the mountain. X Games Pro Boarders takes this ethos once step further though, with the inclusion of the road jump event. The competition takes place at Mt. Baker Gap and the sole aim is to get as much speed as possible and try and jump across the road. It sounds like a recipe for lots of hair raising snowbound tomfoolery but in practice the event becomes extremely boring. Another case of nice idea, shame about the execution then.

Compatibility

O BOARDERS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Rail slides are a quick and easy way to make points. Perhaps too easy though – all you have to do is line yourself up with what ever you're going to slide across and run into it; the quarter pipe arena allows for some particularly impressive air time as you have such a long run up to the ramp.

necessarily a good thing. The boarders feel very twitchy and although the control system is easy to get used to, you never feel as though you're totally in charge at all times. This is especially so when pulling off any of the plethora of stunts at your disposal. Pot luck seems to be the order of the day, at first anyway.

Highly Animated

The stunts themselves are highly spectacular, with some of the best animation we've seen on any board game so far. X Games Pro Boarders also tries to keep the stunt side of things in the realms of realism too, so it's a good piece of programming that makes them as cool as they look on screen. The secret to this is definitely the smooth and stylish animation that graces all of the characters in the game at all times. Sony have pulled off a first on the character front too; all of the boarders in the game are real life boarders. This we feel though, is really only of interest to your hardcore snowboard fan, who would probably rather be out on the slopes than at home playing games anyway.

The boat has also been pushed out for the rest of the visuals. The rendered slopes fit the overall graphical style perfectly to give us what is most definitely the best looking snowboard game out of the current bunch. The excellent video footage of real snowboarders that graces various sections of the game finishes off the graphical package in fine style.

Adrenaline Junkie

However, put the graphics aside and X Games Pro Boarders doesn't really offer the gamer anything new, or even exciting. All of the events (bar one) are standard fare; downhill racing, half-pipe, slope-style and a few jumping events make up the main part of the game. The only slightly different event is the road jump, which you'll be bored with after a few goes. Of course we can't expect any totally crazy events as X Games Pro Boarders is attempting to give us a simulation of the sport. and not an arcade game.

Inspiring?

Which of course wouldn't be a problem if the control and whole feel of the game was a little more inspiring. Don't get me wrong, it's not the worst snowboarding game (that award goes to the abysmal *Chill*) but after playing *CoolBoarders 3*, I really do expect a little more excitement in a snowboard game.

Sony have excelled themselves in the graphical department, and as much as I hate the hard-rockin' music that thrashes away in the background, I must admit that it's very fitting for the game. It's a shame then that there is no adrenaline injection into the gameplay.

It looks as though Sony have just missed the mark then, but next year looks promising. All they have to do is take the visuals from X Games Pro Boarders and combine them with the superlative gameplay of *CoolBoarders 3* and they've got a winner on their hands. Lets just hope somebody at Sony catches on then.

The Competition

CoolBoarders 3 –
Presently the best snowboarding game on the market. It may not look the nuts but it certainly plays 'em.

Streak –
There may be no snow but there's plenty of boards. It's fast fun and a good challenger to the existing snowboard games.

Chill –
Pathetic snowboard cash-in from last year that fails in all departments.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

The action is fast, the graphics the best yet but in the end it remains average.

+ Refined graphics and superb animation.
+ Easily accessible for beginners.
- The handling just doesn't quite hit the mark.
- Why have real snowboarders? Nobody knows them.

OUT OF 100

78

ASTEROIDS

Once again we've got to endure reviews stuffed with the words 'classic' and 'arcade machine' as another oldie attempts a PlayStation re-invention.

Asteroids

Publisher: **Activision**

Developer: **Syrox Development**

Release Date: **Out now**

Price: **£29.99**

STATION

+ It moves like Asteroids.
+ There's a nice sci-fi intro.

- The gameplay is dull and repetitive.
- The controls are clumsy. Or is it me?

OUT OF 100

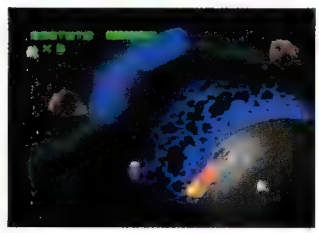
45

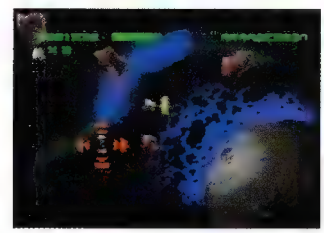
Just why you'd want to play this is beyond me.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

Really, what is the point?

For years and over countless different formats, certain games just keep on popping up. But that's okay because they're class... er, old coin-operated games. Well, it's not okay. These games are now nearly twenty years old and although we hark back to the days of classic gameplay most of these new versions just rip off the format and ignore the gameplay.





This version of Asteroids is one of those. Sure it looks like a tarted up version, it even moves around like the game, but it's not. There's a certain something that made Asteroids the game everyone wanted to play – and it was called a lack of competition. Yep, I disliked the old version too.

Thankfully, there are many better games you can spend your money on these days, so even though it may have looked and played like the business back in the late 70s, in today's world of pre-millennial tension, it's a real pain in the arse.

Why lust after games that really don't inspire you or make you scream to everyone in the house to check out the graphics on a certain move or explosion? It all just seems a bit pointless to me.

Sure the game works like its supposed to, and yeah, when push comes to shove it's a hard and challenging shoot 'em-up. And if you want to wallow in some pitiful nostalgia but with full-colour graphics then fine, go and play to your heart's content. Me, I'm going to play something with a bit more style, attitude, character and fun about it.

TIME CRISIS

The game that started the light gun frenzy is back with a blast on budget. Is it still worth making a drama out of?

Time Crisis (PLATINUM)

Publisher: **Sony**

Developer: **In-House**

Release Date: **Out now**

Price: **£19.99**

STATION

+ Spot on arcade conversion.
+ The best game with the Namco GunCon.

- Without a gun, it's a bit pointless.
- The gameplay is not what you'd called varied.

OUT OF 100

92

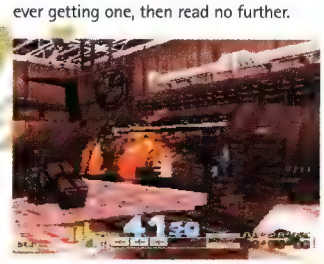
Top arcade fun. Blast the hours away.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

Ah, but where to start?

Time Crisis, you see, is just one fantastic game. And best of all, it's not really dated at all, because of the lack of competition in this kind of market.

Yeah, there are plenty of first person shooters, but I'm talking about playing the game with the light gun, which is really the only way to play it. In fact, if you've not got a gun and have no intention of ever getting one, then read no further.



Playing this game with a joypad is just pointless. The game is such a good conversion of the arcade machine that it would be like walking into your local amusement centre and having the choice to play the game with either a gun or a pad – which would you choose? Exactly.

With that out of the way we can concentrate on the more pleasant aspects the game, namely, everything else. The graphics are finely detailed adding a good sense of atmosphere and the rest of the game engine (dodging behind walls and such like) does its job beautifully.

There's not much more I can say, except to recommend this game to everyone who owns, or has the intention to own, a light gun. It's the slickest-looking, quickest-moving, adrenalin-pumping action fest you can get. Just buy it.

MEGAMAN X4

With game characters leaping around console platforms without a care in the world, you can easily forget who's done what and where. Here's a great example.

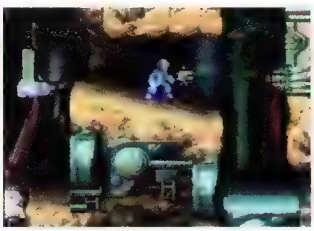
Poor old Megaman! He's been around for donkey's years since his birth on the NES and since then he's become Capcom's figurehead – their version of Crash, Sonic or Mario depending on your preference.

There is one major difference between those characters and the armoured little guy from Capcom: his games usually involve big powerful weapons and strange spaceships that need to be destroyed, as opposed to lots of platforms, lots of bouncy jumping and harmless weaponry. Essentially, Megaman likes to star in violent video games.

But really, he should stop doing this. Not because it's not nice or anything as PC as that, but because the games are awful.

These small reviews give us the perfect opportunity to forget about detail and concentrate on the sheer gameplay. Of which Megaman X4 has very little. In fact after playing the game for about ten minutes, I half expected the PlayStation to open itself up, spit the disk out and laugh as if possessed by some mechanical demon.

'I need games that test me...', it would say. Possibly. I mean we're just talking a basic 2D left to right scrolling shoot 'em-up of the kind that didn't challenge people when they were released on the Spectrum, let alone today's gaming tour de force. And that's all I going to say on the matter.



Megaman X4

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Developer: Capcom

Release Date: February

Price: £34.99

STATION

+ Keeps the Megaman tradition alive.
+ Megaman looks cool (not really).

- Plays and looks old. In a bad way.
- Limited and linear gameplay.

OUT OF 100

39

A very tired and old kind of shoot 'em-up.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

MEGAMAN LEGENDS

He's broken free from his shoot 'em-up shackles and wandered straight into a 3D role-playing epic. Good on you, Mega!

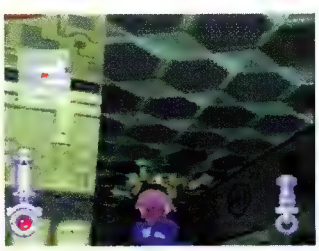
After all that talk of Megaman's myopia when it comes to gaming styles, this game pops onto my desk and I can't help but wondering 'Two Megaman games at the same time – surely some mistake?'. But no, there's definitely no mistake here, because Capcom's hero has finally decided to wake up and smell the 90s coffee. More commonly known as the 3D adventure.

But he's not trying to be Lara Croft. Oh no. He's up for the action, but he's quite content to do a bit of thinking, a bit of walking and a lot of talking. Yep, he's got himself involved in a role-playing game.

This new look, and new inspiration, for Megaman initially pays off. The intro sequence rips off *Waterworld*, *Indiana Jones* and *Back to the Future* in various scenes, and gives you plenty to do to start with. Then you settle down and start to explore.

The attitude, action and pace are electric, and although the dialogue is definitely not going to win any awards, the whole game hangs together well enough to provide quite a lot of entertainment.

My only reservation would be that unless you're a fan you won't really connect with either the surroundings or the characters, and will generally feel like you're going through the motions. Nice try, though and better than another shoot 'em-up.



Megaman Legends

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Developer: Capcom

Release Date: February

Price: £34.99

STATION

+ A brave departure from his usual style.
+ Big, bold and bright 3D that works well.

- A little too slow and simple in places.
- No real depth to anything as you proceed.

OUT OF 100

65

By far his most ambitious game to date, and Megaman almost pulls it off.

Rated by Paul Mellerick

SHIPITE
20
namco
R.T
SOLVALOU
TOKYAN
namco
PAC-MAN
79

R4: RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

The worshipped by most (ridiculed by some) *Ridge Racer* has had various outings in the last three years although you'd be hard pushed to tell the difference between any of them. R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 finally breaks the mould and offers what can only be described as the best looking racing game ever to grace the 'Station. What about that handling though?...

LEFT TO RIGHT: Some of the track design can be pretty devious. Just about to overtake here but once you hit the hill the track narrows causing you to either hit the other car or scrape the wall; the blurring on the car lights make you feel as though you're playing a permanent part in Drugstore Cowboy.

R4: Ridge Racer Type 4

Publisher: **Namco**

Developer: **In-House**

Release Date: **Out now [import]**

Game Type: **Racing/Cash-In**

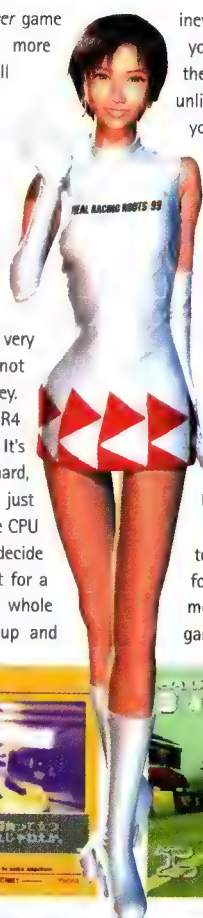
No of Players: **1-2**

Price: **£60 approx**

Compatibility

I can smell money. So too can Namco, which let's face it, is why the *Ridge Racer* licence even got past the dreadful 'sequel' (I use this phrase in the broadest terms possible), *Ridge Racer Revolution*. The original *Ridge Racer* sold by the truck-load, so it was inevitable that a sequel would come along, but Namco failed to fix one vital flaw for both *Revolution* and the almost as dodgy *Rage Racer*: the handling, which was complete and utter shite.

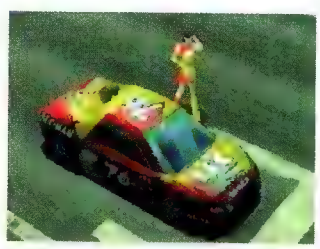
Okay, millions would disagree with me and bandy quotes such as 'It's an arcade game', or 'Who needs realism?' around. And I'd have to agree with you. But, and it's a butt bigger than Vanessa Feltz', *Ridge Racer* only has a loyal, and often fanatical, following because it was the first racing game on the PlayStation and it still looks okay (in comparison). It's not because it has a great driving engine, and let's face it, a racing game really needs one. Your judgement has been clouded. As far as I'm concerned, the *Ridge Racer* game engine has always been more contrived than a well planned out SAS rescue operation. Of course this all changes for R4 doesn't it?



Binary Style

Doesn't It? Well, yes and no. The car handling is still heavily influenced by the previous *Ridge Racer* games. By this I mean it's very solid and although not blindingly fast, pretty pacey. Cornering though, is where R4 loses considerable points. It's not that taking corners is hard, at times it's even fun, it's just that it seems as though the CPU has an on/off switch to decide when to flick the back out for a power slide, making the whole thing appear a little set-up and inevitably pointless. You feel as though you don't have the freedom to take the corner in whatever way you like, unlike *TOCA 2* or *Gran Turismo*, where you have real control over a corner and the way your cars slide. The guys at Namco must think they're onto a good thing though. Binary, the basic code used by all computers, consists of millions of zeros and ones that act as switches for on and off; why then use thousands of bits of information to program the cornering physics of a car when you can use one – on or bloody off! Of course it's not quite as straight forward as that but I think you get my point.

Having said all this, it pains me to admit that the handling on this fourth Ridge instalment does feel more refined than the previous games. It's even more painful to



LEFT TO RIGHT: Before you start a race, this track screen appears giving you details of what lies ahead. As the icon moves around, the diagram behind it shows exactly how the road looks. In a pixellated kind of way that is; as you can see from this dockside scene, the backgrounds are very detailed.

admit that against all common sense I actually do enjoy playing R4. It's just that it all feels so contrived.

Fine Details

A successful driving game doesn't depend solely on how well the cars handle though. Many other factors enter the equation that makes or breaks the latest blockbuster motor-sport fest. And Namco have managed to include enough of these to make R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 a worthy challenger to the top titles in this hard fought, and constantly evolving genre.

First and undoubtedly foremost are the visuals which don't just bowl you over, but kick you whilst you're down. Finding words to fully describe the picture that R4 paints is extremely hard going. The screen shots don't do it justice because you really have to see it all moving to realise just how inviting this game looks. Many factors contribute to this visual vivification that Namco have achieved, not least the amazing attention to detail. Everything from the seminal *Ridge Racer* helicopter to stunt planes, vapour trails, birds, trees, mountains, cities, fireworks, track side advertising and roaring crowds. The cars even rear up when you accelerate or change gear. The list of details really is endless – you're constantly noticing little things that you haven't seen before. One of the most impressive graphical feats though, is the lighting effects that are the first on the PlayStation to give a real feeling of day, night, dusk or dawn.

Graphical Prowess

These extraneous details would be nothing if the visual basics of R4 weren't as instantly astounding as they are. The cars themselves (of which there are around 45 and not 300 as you may have read) could easily have been designed and realised by Enzo Ferrari (if he was alive of course). The guy who designed the original monstrous Nürburgring circuit would be proud if he could've come up with some of the tracks here. There are in fact only around four but in true *Ridge Racer* style there are plenty of variations and different routes that open up as you progress through the game.

All of this (which can only be described as) visual beauty runs at quite a sedate pace at first but get into some of the hotter cars and the pace changes from sedate to alarming. Surely then, PlayStaion can't handle the graphical prowess that the bods at Namco obviously posess, especially at this speed? Well it can actually. Not one iota of glitching, draw-in or slow down occurs at any time during play. Hard to believe yes, but true nonetheless.

But what about the racing itself then? Well it's not quite as hairy as *TOCA 2* and not as classy as *Gran Turismo*, but

HIGH RES RIDGE

Something of a bonus for all you avid import game-spotters out there is the inclusion of a tarted up high-res version of the original *Ridge Racer*, plus the original version in it's low-res form so that you can actually see the difference. Playing the original does actually highlight the good points of R4. You'll notice that the R4 handling is far superior to the original game, just in the same flick-the-back out style. As an extra bonus you also get to play Galaxians whilst the original *Ridge Racer* loads up.

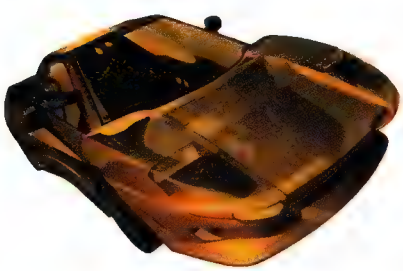
First Ten Minutes

If only I knew Japanese, I might just be able to get into some real *Ridge Racer* action. As it stands I don't, so I spend the first ten minutes trying to work out what does what. Then I sit through a glut of more Japanese text as my manager gabbles away. Why those pesky Japs can't learn English I don't know. It's just plain rude.

JOGCON

Namco have come up with a brand new device to make controlling R4 a whole new experience. The JogCon is similar to the NegCon but Namco claim that it's the first PlayStation controller to utilise real force feedback. It actually puts resistance up when you turn the pad, in the same way that a steering wheel on a (gosh) real car would. This may make handling the cars around corners a little more instinctive but at the time of going to press (I've always wanted to say that) the JogCon had not arrived in the UK.

BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: Okay so this car does look like Condor Man's boat. So what!?; it's a well known fact that *Ridge Racer* games are unplayable in the out of car view. R4 is no different; check out the curves on that. The car that is; the Extra Trial puts you up against the best driver from each team. Only proffesionals need apply.



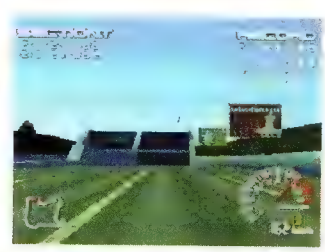
as an arcade racer it certainly does the job. One thing that does let it down is the fact that all of the CPU cars are very spread out so you never find yourself faced with a traffic jam that you have to squeeze past. The AI of your opponents is quite sophisticated, though. Come up against a worthy one and he'll weave to cut out your line or even nudge you to slow you down. Once, past look in the mirror and you'll see the CPU cars swerving all over the shop trying to get a line past you.

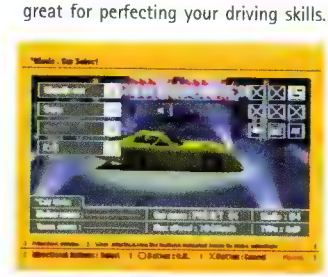
Arcade Racer?

Something which dumbfounds me about R4 is that, although hailed as an arcade racer (which it most definitely is), there isn't actually an arcade mode. Yes that's right: what is destined to be the worlds best, if not most popular, arcade racing game fails to give you the thrill of a quick single race. No instant gratification or intravenous shot of adrenaline then. A bit odd if you ask me.

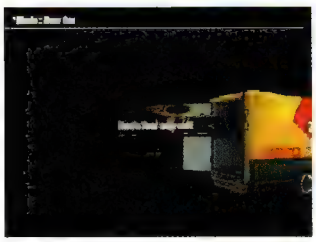
Instead of the all important arcade you get a Grand Prix mode. Here you join one of four racing teams and drive your way through a season's worth of races. This season mode actually goes into quite some depth with detailed analysis of your driving from other members of your team. Or so I'm told 'cause I don't understand the Japanese text. Winning races gives you access to better cars, with the idea being to keep going through gaining experience, finding new tracks and looking forward to the next car you win.

There's also a Time Trial which is great for perfecting your driving skills.





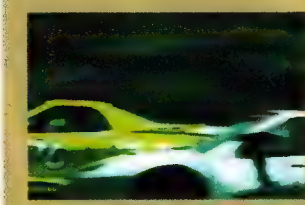
CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: The lighting effects are superb, especially when you hair through one of the many tunnels in the game; the small dot in the distance is a stunt plane. Check out the vapour trail; the car select screen gives you plenty of information about the vehicle you're racing; in classic *Ridge Racer* style, big air is never far away. It would be nice if every landing wasn't perfect; the tracks in R4 offer a welcome change of scenery over the previous games. Check out this winding road.



BOTTOM SEQUENCE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Whenever you get a new car you actually get to see it being delivered to the garage. It arrives in a truck and is unveiled for display in true car show fashion. Great.

SEXY LADY

We're not too sure about the relevance of the stunningly rendered intro sequence but it's certainly fun to watch. It basically involves some high action racing shots combined with a story of a quite sexy Japanese lady. In the end the winner of the race picks the girl up hitch-hiking and they drive away. What for we don't know, but the sexy lady shouldn't have been hitch-hiking on her own.



In fact, many *Ridge Racer* fans will enjoy the time trial more than the races, as it allows them to hone and perfect their driving skill in pursuit of shaving seconds off of their best times. Anally retentive springs to mind here.

The Extra Trial mode allows you to go head to head against the top drivers which is one hell of a challenge but something the anoraks I mentioned above will enjoy. The lack of arcade mode is a bit of a let down, but even unable to read the Japanese text the Grand Prix mode will be just enough to keep you glued to the game.

Retro Allegiance

Namco obviously think that R4 is about to steal *Gran Turismo*'s glory, but, unless you're an original fan of *Ridge Racer*, there's no chance that you'll be tempted to the arcade dark side. R4 has a lot going for it though: graphically it's more tempting than another bowl of crunchy nut cornflakes; the depth of the Grand Prix season is commendable, only Japanese; the cars are some of the best drawn and exciting you're likely to see in any game ever; and the almost scientific attention to detail will keep coming back to impress you time and time again.

It has it's flaws though. I won't keep on about the handling but I'm sure I'm not in the minority when I say that it simply doesn't hit the mark. And although the visuals are stunning, there's no car damage or real crashing at all. Two things that a racing game this late in the PlayStation's life should most definitely contain. If Codemasters can do it, why can't Namco? Finally whoever came up with the musical score should get their definition of drum & bass, techno and garage sorted. Because this ain't it.

R4 could quite easily have been a *Gran Turismo* beater but Namco's allegiance to the earlier Ridge games means that it can never reach the dizzy heights of Sony's monster racing title. However, despite those oh so niggling flaws, R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 does ultimately provide a fast, solid and simply beautiful (sorry) race. And that's what it's all about ain't it? Well there is the handling...

REPLAY REVOLUTION

Sony's top draw racer kicked off a revolution in many aspects of the humble driving game, including the action replay. This was a function that many games before it seemed to bolt onto the end but Gran Turismo's replay's were more than just an afterthought, they were absolutely stunning. Many games have tried to emulate the video like quality of the GT replays but none, until now, have come close. R4's replays however are just as good looking and every bit as smooth and fast as Gran Turismo. The problem is that as the racing isn't quite as action packed as GT, the replays tend to become a little tedious. And you only get to see the last lap. They still look cool though.

The Competition

Gran Turismo -
Looks great, plays better and with over two hundred cars and a plethora of tracks you won't grow tired of it.

TOCA 2 -

The specialist subject means that it'll never reach the audience of *GT* but it certainly looks as good and drives even better.

Rage Racer -
Improves on the original *Ridge Racer* games but still has that same old car physics engine.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

Looks fantastic but still has a superficial and contrived car handling engine.

+ The best looking PlayStation driving game so far.
+ Free high-res original *Ridge Racer* thrown in.
- Same old handling physics engine.
- The cars all look too similar.

OUT OF 100

85

R-TYPE DELTA

They won't let it lie, will they? The Bydo Empire are back to interfere with the peace loving nations of Earth again, and this time, they've had their Weetabix!

R-Type Delta

Publisher: Virgin

Developer: Irem

Release Date: Out now [import]

Game Type: Shoot 'em-up

No of Players: One

Price: £52.00

First Ten Minutes

'Hang on, I remember these enemies, and these attack waves... Doh!' R-Type Delta lulls you into a false sense of security by tricking you into thinking it is the same as the first game... but it's not.

Compatibility

Few games have the stature of R-Type in the games industry. A genuine classic that has single-handedly kept Irem in business since its first arcade appearance back in the mid '80s, and as far as I can tell, the only game that graced almost every system from the Speccie right up to the PSX.

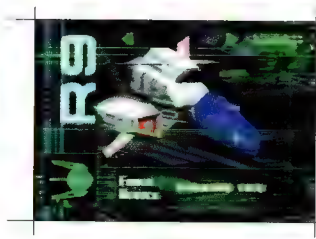
The greatest shoot 'em-up ever, which took elements first seen in the likes of *Gradius* and pumped them full of steroids, *R-Type* still holds its head high compared to the best of the genre in 1999. This claim is supported by the recent release of *R-Types*, which is surpisingly stiff competition for Squaresoft's mighty *Einhander*.

The King Is Back

With R-Type Delta, developers Irem have taken a very wise route, opting to keep the elements that made *R-Type* so special in the first place and improve upon them, rather than attempting to make a new version of the game in 3D. Don't misunderstand – the game features beautiful polygonal 3D graphics which are as impressive as those in *Einhander*, but movement is only possible on a two-dimensional plane - once again see the 'E' word.

When you begin the game you could be forgiven for thinking that it is simply the original with improved graphics. It is, however, a whole new experience, albeit one containing many vigorous nods in the direction of the original. Remember the snake with the weak point in its

R-Types

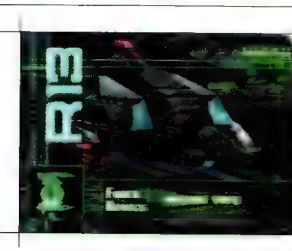


R–9

A slightly updated version of the original ship that first took on the Bydo Empire more than a decade ago, the R-9 is not flashy, but is as reliable as it has ever been.

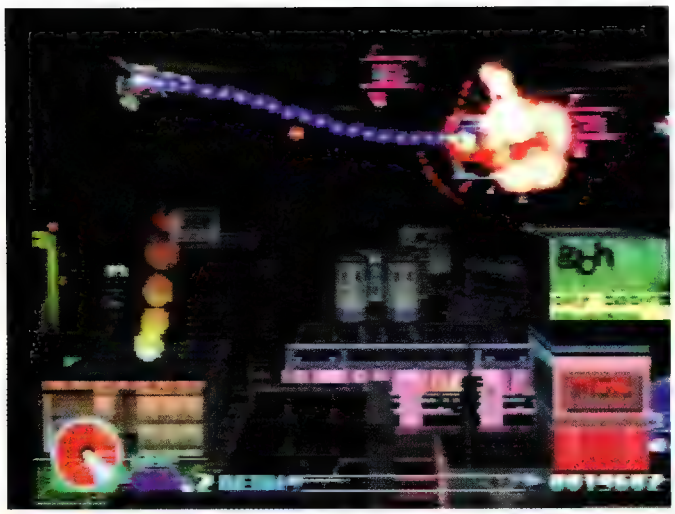
R–X

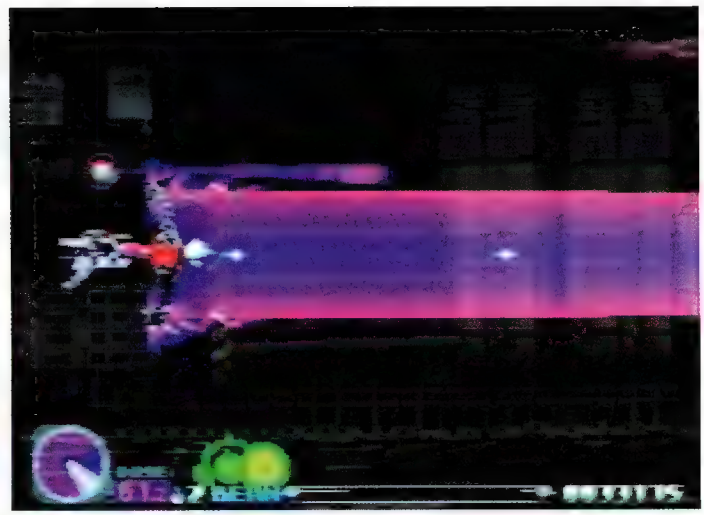
The R-X has an impressive range of power-ups and a variation of The Force which roams around spewing hot death in all directions. The cockpit is a bit wussy though...

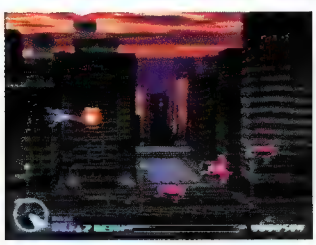


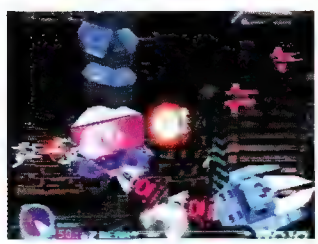
R–13

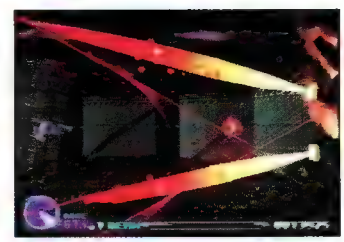
The R-13 is the mother of all one-man fighter craft, the Jaguar XK8 of the future – this baby has the most impressive weapons and a baddass version of The Force. Let's rock!





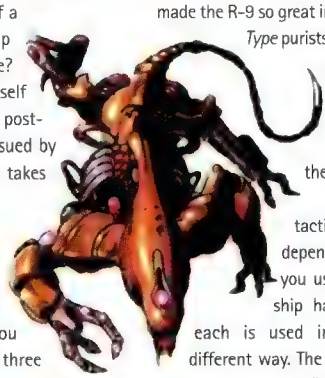






BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: R-Type Delta begins with the exact same drone ships in the same attack patterns as the original *R-Type* did; the worm with the vulnerable middle is back, more dangerous than ever; this huge walking robot on level three can cause major headaches; the smart bomb effects are very trippy. Pass me the bong...

middle? This time it appears in the form of a huge robotic cyber-python which burrows into the ground and levels skyscrapers with a mere flick of its tail. What about that bugger of a mothership which made up the whole of level three? This time you find yourself flying through a snowy post-apocalyptic wasteland pursued by a huge walking droid that takes up several screens!



Types Of R-Type

Perhaps the most notable difference between this and its ancestors is that you now have a choice of three ships, including, of course, the legendary R-9. This ship operates in the way it always did and of course, The Force is still there in all its indestructible glory, and it remains the greatest ever shoot 'em-up weapon to this day.

The other ships are what make this game though, featuring a far more impressive range of weaponry, but still retaining the essence of what originally made the R-9 so great in the first place. *R-Type* purists may be disgusted, but hey, do I sound like I give a damn?

This adds to the longevity of the game as different tactics need to be used depending on what ship you use. Of course each ship has The Force, but each is used in a significantly different way. The R-13s version, for example, does not fire a shot of its own when detached, rather a blue 'laser lasso' is kept between you and The Force. This in itself is fantastic, as you can learn to wrap it around you to act as a shield, or you can stretch it across the screen like a solid wall of blue fire, destroying all that cross its path.

Although it can at times seem that you are indestructible, with a pod on top, one below, The Force bolted to your front and a swathe of bullets, missiles and laser fire covering everything, the beauty of *R-Type* remains. You will get cocky and one stray bullet will find its way through, leaving you stripped of everything and humbly back at square one, being far more careful...

Doesn't Mean It's Gotta Be Pure...

Yes its *R-Type*. Yes it's the same every bloody time you play it. Yes it gets very frustrating, and is very difficult. And yes, it is utterly fantastic, better than *Einhander* in my book. Square have shot themselves in the foot by not releasing their title in Europe, leaving it to R-Type Delta to clean up big time.

If, however, you're a purist and you don't believe that tampering with perfection can produce something better, sod off.

The Competition

G-Darius -
THQs effort has an interesting power-up system, involving the kidnapping of enemy craft, but this and a two-player mode cannot prevent it from being generic, unfulfilling, and ultimately, boring.

R-Types -
Arcade perfect copies of *R-Type* and *R-Type 2* for £30. What more could you want? Play these games as the ultimate precursor to *R-Type Delta*.

Einhander -
Graphically more impressive than *R-Type Delta* and a rock hard blaster to boot. Original power-up system and mass destruction make it great fun. No PAL release yet though...

Rated by Jon Austin

STATION	+ It's *R-Type*. + Didn't I say it's *R-Type*.	OUT OF 100
The best blast from the past is back, and better than ever.	- Blistered thumbs. - Can be frustrating.	91

ONE ON ONE

Jumping around with balls has already been attempted by just about every sport label there is, but there have been very few big winners. Who, in the right frame of mind, would want to go one on one with *NBA Jam* or *NBA Live '99*?

One on One

Publisher: Import

Developer: Joradun Co. Ltd

Release Date: January [import]

Game Type: B-Ball Beat 'em-up

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £52

CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: No-one knows how Brown gets a beaver to sit on his bald head, but then if we knew, we'd all have one; green hair, wings and playing against a four foot high child, Luka is a man who clearly doesn't like to lose; basketball players that wear wings can never be court leaving any skidmarks on the pitch, apparently.

First Ten Minutes

Straight from the off, some people might see the limitations of this game – against the computer it's too easy to score and against your mates, well unfortunately it's still to easy.

Hot horse shit always sells better than the cold variety

– if only for its unique selling point of being able to prove just how fresh it really is! Unfortunately, there's very little that can be said to be fresh about basketball games. It's quite popular in Europe but it's in the States where it's hotter than a horse's ringpiece. Which is probably why all of the best basketball games like *NBA Jam* and *NBA Live '99* have come from there.

One on One is a basketball game okay, but it has approached the subject from the street fighting side of town. In fact, as each of the uniquely attributed eight players line up against you, you would be forgiven for thinking that this game draws its inspiration directly from the old Capcom classic.

Tip Off

Two characters take it in turns to attack and defend a single basket. You can play against your pals or the computer, using the familiar format for choosing a character – from the winged featured Luka, to obtusely normal-looking Brown, who like any normal bloke, likes to run around with a beaver on his head. Each player has unique abilities and special moves, all of which you must use to get past your opponent and score a basket. Each round continues until the attacking player has lost the ball, whereupon the players reverse their former roles and the fun starts all over again.

Un-Sporting

One-on-one is as much a part of basketball as penalties are grounded in football. The thing is though, that no-one would pay to watch someone kick 50 penalties. The word for that type of football would be 'boring' and the words for this type of basketball on the PSX are 'really boring'.

It's a bit of a shame, as the game tries to add a new aspect to a tired genre, but unfortunately there's nothing to make you take notice. The graphics are clean and crisp but there's no excuse for them not to be. The controls are fairly easy to pick up, and even the characters' flashier moves are simple to perform. The problem is not the competency of the gamecode, it lies in the failure to give you any reason for wanting to play it. It adds nothing new but then, it takes nothing away from putting a hoop on your garage door, inviting your mates round and redesigning some of your neighbour's car bonnets.

The Competition

NBA Live '99 –

You don't have to look very far to see better games than One on One. Try our review on page 62 of STATION.

NBA Jam –

Another solid competitor from the fully licenced stable.

Compatibility

Memory Card

Rated by Gary Powers

STATION

Street Fighter meets Slam and Jam with the result that they both get their arses kicked.

+ Impressive combination of sport and fighting.
+ Easy to score baskets with minimum effort or skill.
- Easy is for little bairns and ugly fat wenches.
- A poor hybrid of two genres.

OUT OF 100

43

STREET FIGHTER 2 COLLECTION

This is the game that started it all. All the fuss about violence in videogames and the dominance of beat 'em-ups in the console market. So how does it look five years down the line? Fortunately Capcom have decided to show us...

SF2 Collection

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: In-House
Release Date: January [import]
Game Type: Beat 'em-up
No of Players: 1–2
Price: £52

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ken is a top fighter, but even he's got to be a little scared of Eddie 'Fat Bloke' Honda and his hundred-hand slap; here in Championship Edition, the combatants now include the bosses, like Sagat, from the first game; Ken's fireball punch hits his fellow American, Guild, square in the torso. He's going to be tender there.

First Ten Minutes

The reputation of the game precedes itself, so you're already hyped up about playing it. Then you realise just what great fun it is playing as Ken and kicking Chun Li straight in the face. Great stuff.

The Competition

Tekken 3 -

The king of fighting games, this owes its existence to titles like *Street Fighter*. But this is an all-singing and all-dancing 3D fest, backed up with some the best fighters the world has ever seen. Downright essential.

Street Fighter Alpha -

The 3D version of the game and its all been brought up to date nicely, thank you very much. Maybe loses something of its instant arcade touch.

Compatibility

Nostalgia is a very dangerous thing. Just because you enjoyed something a few years ago, doesn't mean a) it was actually any good and b) it's worthwhile doing all over again. I feel the same way about *Grange Hill*.

So how does this analogy work with games and more importantly with Street Fighter 2 Collection? To clear up any confusion, this is three Street Fighter 2 versions all on one disc. There's the original (subtitled The World Warrior), followed by Championship Edition and then finally, the nutter Turbo Hyper Fighting instalment.

To detail the differences between these games would be essentially pointless and take up too much space – suffice to say that there's little tweaks and extra fighters to be played around with as you go from one game to another.

Not only that but there's also some tips and artwork to be found in a menu of the main screen, this acts as a pleasant and interesting bonus to the proceedings rather than an essential add-on.

But it's when playing the game that all the fun comes flooding back, and you realise just how good it really is. It's true that when put up against the likes of *Tekken 3*, it falls slightly by the wayside, but real beat 'em-up fans should relish the idea of playing around with all these versions. The graphics are great and the movement and controls recreate the sweaty arcade feel perfectly.

Not everyone is going to get a kick (sorry) from this collection, and indeed, you're not even getting three different games, so the word collection is maybe inappropriate. What you do get is a playable reminder of one of the biggest phenomena this industry has even seen. And you have to say, it still plays a mighty fine game. S

ABOVE: Cute and diminutive, she may be, but Chun Li can hold her own against the rest of the fighters, if you use her moves wisely.

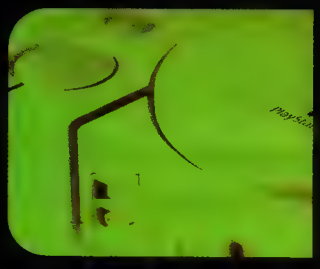
Rated by Paul Mellerick

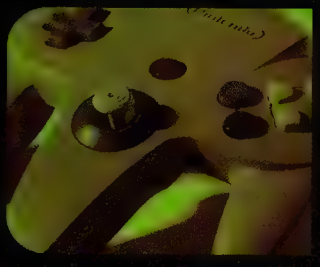
STATION — Top class fighting action with some nostalgia thrown in for good measure.

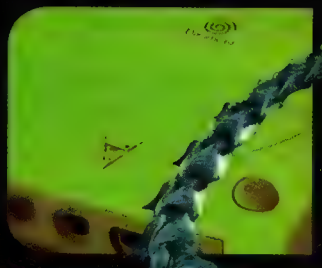
+ Excellent arcade quality feel.
+ Bonus artwork and tips for all three games.
- Three different versions isn't really a collection.
- Thanks to modern graphics, this looks really old.

OUT OF 100: **81**

TOTAL CONTROL







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ARGONAUT	Tel: 0181 200 5777	
Internet:	www.argonaut.com	
ANCO	Tel: 01322 292 518	
Internet:	www.anco.co.uk	
EIDOS	Tel: 0181 636 3000	
Internet:	www.eidos.co.uk	
BULLFROG	Tel: 01483 579 399	
Internet:	www.bullfrog.co.uk	
CAPCOM	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.capcom.com	
	www.capcom.co.jp	
CODEMASTERS	Tel: 01926 814 132	
Internet:	www.codemasters.co.uk	
CORE DESIGN	Tel: 01332 297 797	
Internet:	www.core-design.com	
CRANBERRY SOURCE	Tel: 0181 343 9373	
Internet:	www.cranberry.co.uk	
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.crystald.com	
CTW	Tel: 01462 442 472	
Internet:	www.ctw.co.uk	
DATEL ELECTRONICS	Tel: 01785 810 800	
Internet:	www.datel.co.uk	
DMA DESIGN	Tel: 01382 561 333	
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ELECTRONIC ARTS	Tel: 01753 549 442	
Internet:	www.ea.com	
Helpline:	0891 669944/0171 565 7303	
EIDOS	Tel: 0181 636 3000	
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FIRE INTERNATIONAL	Tel: 01302 325 225	
Internet:	N/A	
GAMESTER/LMP	Tel: 01992 503 133	
Internet:	N/A	
GREMLIN	Tel: 0114 263 9900	
Internet:	www.gremlin.co.uk	
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Internet:	www.gtinteractive.com	
Helpline:	0171 565 7303	
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KONAMI	Tel: 01895 853 000	
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LOGIC 3	Tel: 0181 900 0024	
Internet:	N/A	
LUCASARTS	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.lucasgames.com	
MAXIS	Tel: 0171 505 1500	
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MIDWAY	No UK offices	
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SHINY	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.shiny.com	
SONY COMPUTER ENT.	Tel: 0171 911 8700	
Internet:	www.playstation.co.uk	
Helpline:	0881 505 505	
SQUARESOFT	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.squaresoft.com (USA)	
	www.square.co.jp (Japan)	
TAKE 2 INT	Tel: 0171 3847500	
Internet:	www.take2games.com	
TELSTAR	Tel: 01932 22223	
Internet:	www.telstar.co.uk/tes/index.htm	
THQ	Tel: 01483 767 656	
Internet:	www.thq.com	
TITUS	Tel: 0171 700 2119	
Internet:	www.titusgames.com	
UBI SOFT	Tel: 0181 944 9000	
Internet:	www.ubisoft.com	
VIRGIN	Tel: 0171 368 2255	
Internet:	www.vie.co.uk	

Try to make your calls to companies pertinent and only call with problems after you have read the manual throughly. If you've exhausted your options and explored every avenue, then you've every right to call the company about your software. After all, if you'd bought anything else off a company and you had a question, they'd be happy to help!

THE WORLD'S BEST SELLING PLAYSTATION TIPS MAGAZINE

PlayStation SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS TO:

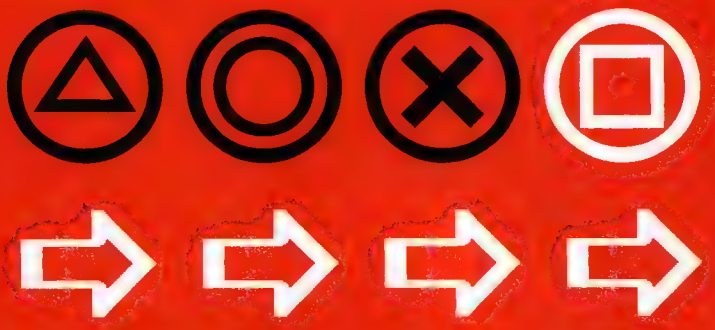
- AKUJI THE HEARTLESS
- MUSIC • ODT
- ABE'S ODDYSEE
- SENSIBLE SOCCER
- MEGAMAN LEGENDS

MASSIVE CHEATS SECTION

ON SALE NOW!

THE eDGE

Frustration is born of many sources. Sex, art, and videogames will all frustrate us, at some time or another. Fortunately, for one of the above there is a simple remedy, an instant form of relief. Cheat. Here's this months instalment of the PlayStation equivalent of Freudian analysis, but remember, cheating is only a good idea with the videogames...



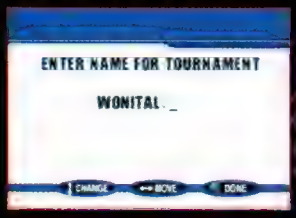
BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

BY ANY MEANS NE

COOLBOARDERS 3

Enter the tournament mode and when you get the chance to enter your name, enter these instead.

WONITALL - This opens up all the tracks to play on including the US Open
BIGHEADS - Surprisingly, this gives all the boarders, big silly heads. Press ○ to inflate and ✕ to deflate.
OPEN_EM - Opens up all the boarders and the boards.



TOCA 2

Lots and lots of little codes to make the game more interesting and a bit more amusing too.

BONUS TRACK
Enter 'TECHLOCK' as a name in single player mode.

BATTLE MODE OPTION IN CHALLENGE MODE
Enter 'BANGBANG' as a name in single player mode.

QUICKER DAMAGE
Enter 'DUBBED' as a name in single player mode. Then, parts will break as soon as another car is hit.

LOW GRAVITY
Enter 'LUNAR' as a name in single player mode. Then, your car will remain in the air longer after crashes.

FORTY LAP RACE
Enter 'LONGLONG' as a name in single player mode.

TURBO MODE
Enter 'FASTBOY' as a name in single player mode.

MINI-CARS
Enter 'MINICARS' as a name in single player mode.

INVISIBLE CAR EXCEPT FOR TIRES
Enter 'JUSTFEET' as a name in single player mode.

HIGHER ELEVATED TRACKS
Enter 'ELASTIC' as a name in single player mode.

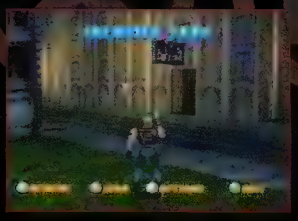
BOUNCING COLLISIONS
Enter 'BCASTLE' as a name in single player mode.

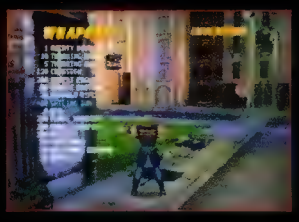
BLURRED BACKGROUND
Enter 'TRIPPY' as a name in single player mode.

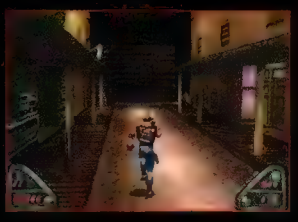
DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL

Press pause during the game and enter the following codes.

○, ○, ↑, ○, ○, ↓, ○, →, ○, ← to receive all weapons.
←, →, ←, →, SELECT, ←, →, ←, → SELECT for infinite ammo.
Enter this code twice - ○, ○, ○, ○, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, SELECT for God mode.
Press ○ five times, then ✕ five times to get all items.

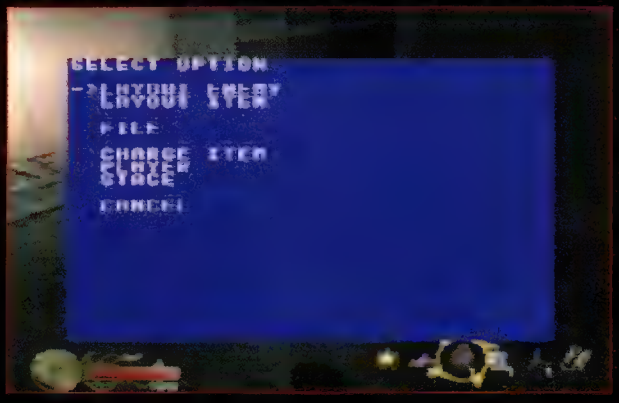


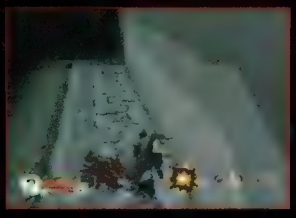




TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASINS

Press START to pause the game. Then press and hold ○ and ✕ then press ↑, ○, ↓, ✕, ←, □, →, △. Then release ○ and ✕ and press ○, ✕, ○, ✕. The game freezes and then you press START to unpause the game. Now press ○ and ✕ simultaneously and up pops a debug menu. From here you can alter the various mechanics of the game and even become invincible. Be careful though because sometimes this causes the game to crash.





COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE

Enter any of the following at the password screen EXACTLY as they appear (capitalization is important). Keep returning to the password screen to enter as many codes as desired.

Blizzard – Enable all codes.
Stormlord – Disable all codes.
Vampire – Invincibility.
Tornado – Have all weapons.
DarkAngel – Primary weapons don't overheat.
Chimera – infinite secondary weapons.
Avalanche – Infinite afterburner usage.
Hydra – Have tons of tokens.
Thunderchild – All ships available.
Demon – Mission and Ending select.

TOMB RAIDER III

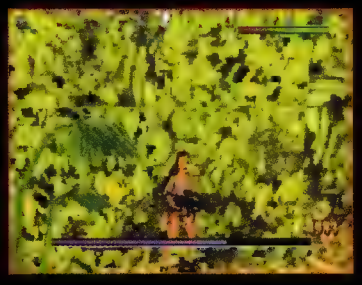
ALL THE KEYS
While playing press (five times), (three times), (twice), (twice), (twice).

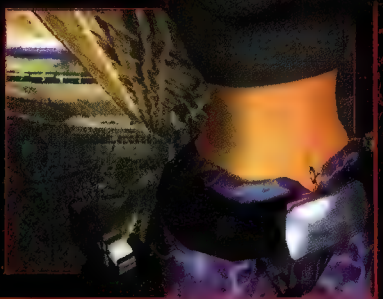
ALL WEAPONS, MEDKITS, FLARES AND SAVE CRYSTALS
While playing press (twice), (four times), (twice), (twice), (twice), (twice).

LEVEL SKIP
While playing press (twice), (four times), (four times), .

RACETRACK KEY
To get the racetrack key press (three times), (six times), (five times), (twice) while playing in Lara's mansion.

SECRET ROOM IN LARA'S MANSION
When you enter the mansion go to her pool. Behind the diving board there is a switch. Press it to open a door in the main room with a switch behind it. Pull the switch and quickly turn around and sprint for the room across the hall. Inside you'll find some of the artifacts she's collected on her adventures.

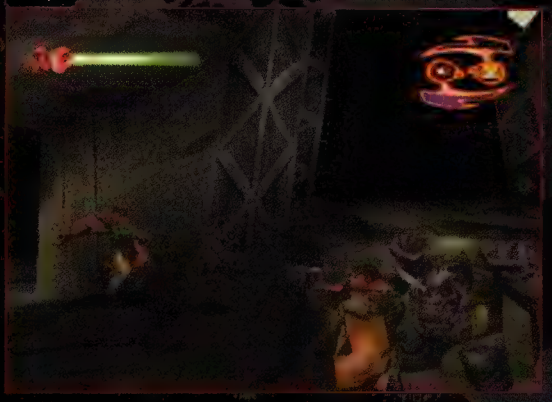




SMALL SOLDIERS

Nothing too complicated here, just simple password codes for each level.

LEVEL	PASSWORD
Gorgon	
Dimensional Temple	
Floating Fortress	
Spirit Bog	
Canyon Village	
Creepy Caverns	
Space Ship	
Hall Of Patriots	
Graveyard Of War	
Nuclear Mine	
Launch Center	



MOTORHEAD

Select Options and then go into the code screen to enter these passwords

COWRULES - Access division 2 cars and tracks.

FRAGTIME - Access division 1 cars and tracks (including Div 2).

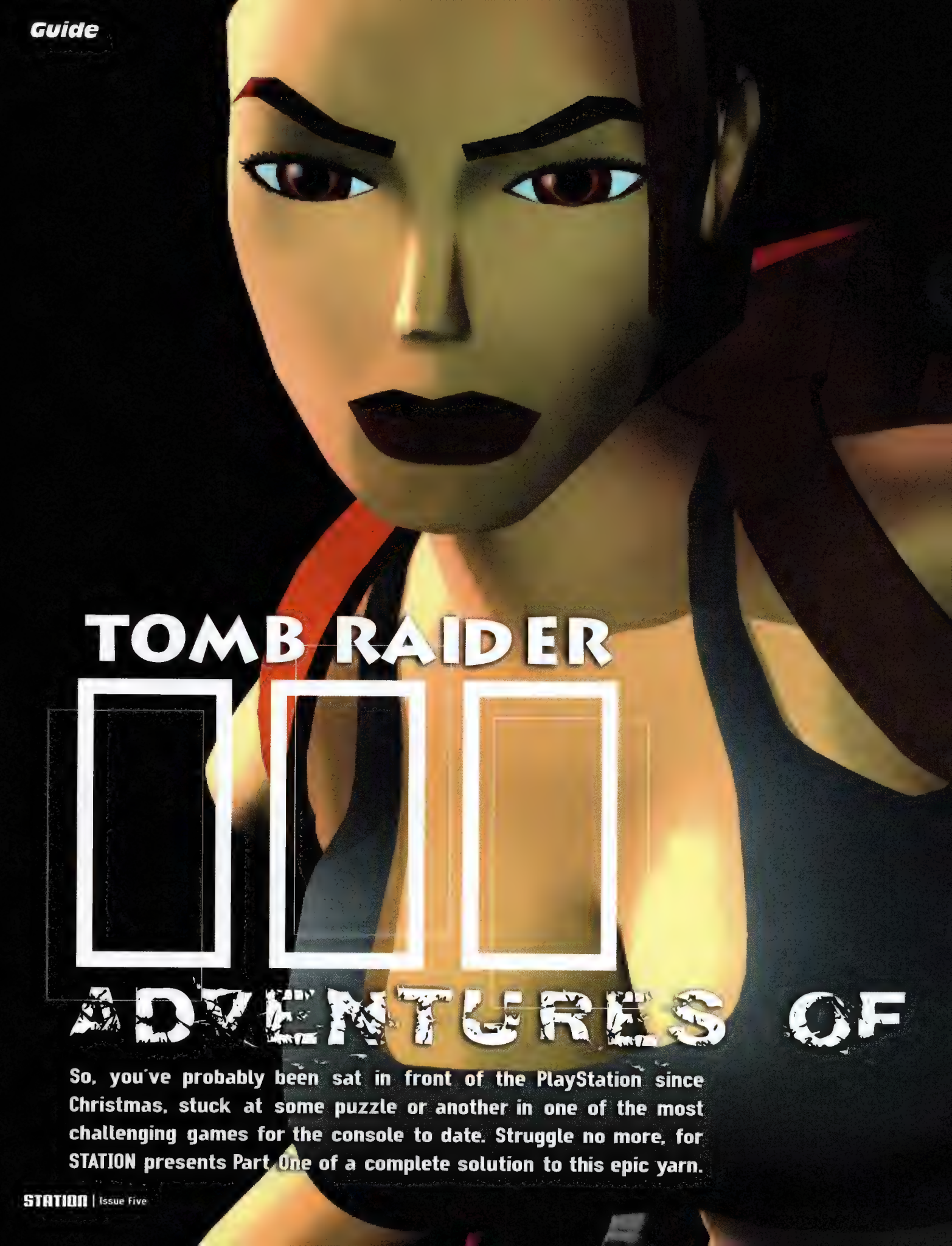
TURBOMOS - Access Nolby Hills (division 2 and 1).

LASTCODE - Access all cars and tracks.

INSANITY - Use 8 cars, hidden colour effects and new camera angles

SOFTHEAD - Activates motion blur

SUPERCAR - Sets the camera high above your vehicle

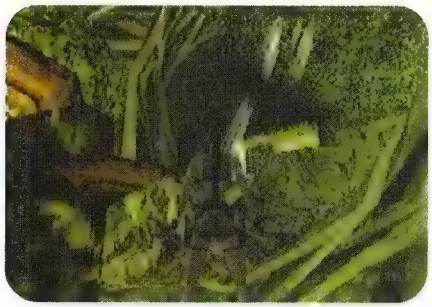
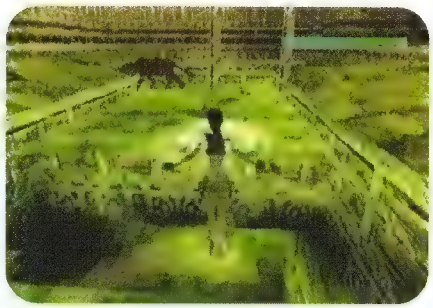


TOMB RAIDER

ADVENTURES OF

So, you've probably been sat in front of the PlayStation since Christmas, stuck at some puzzle or another in one of the most challenging games for the console to date. Struggle no more, for STATION presents Part One of a complete solution to this epic yarn.

LARA CROFT

INDIA

Lara's adventure starts in an Indian jungle complete with monkeys, tigers and greenery. First stop is the temple to find out the whereabouts of the Infada artefact.

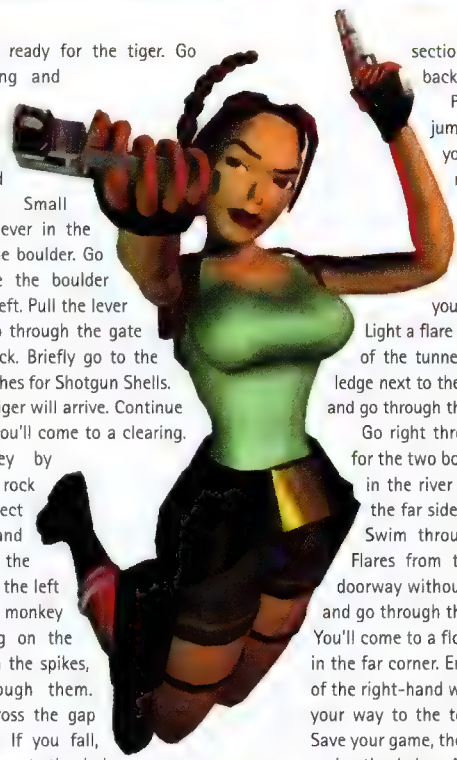
JUNGLE

There's only one way to go from here, down. Walk forward and slide down the slope, then jump to the left to collect Flares and Small Medipack. When you reach the bottom, go left and collect the Savegame Crystal. Jump back up onto the ledge and then drop by the tree. Follow the monkey through the passage and pull the lever. Go back to the tree and through the open gate. Pull the lever and quickly jump into the recess opposite to avoid the moving spiked wall. Head to the gap at the far end and grab the deathslide. Jump onto the block and use a run-jump to reach the opening in the wall.

BASE CAMP

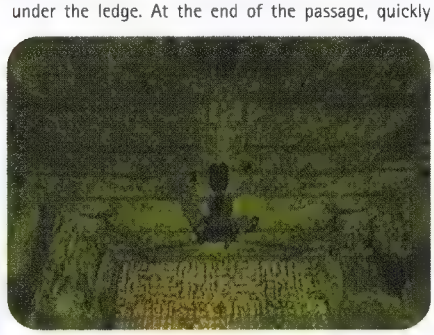
When Lara reaches the camp she finds an explorer. The guy is obviously in all sorts of bother. He explains that two of his fellow travellers are inside the temple and then makes a sharp exit. Lara follows suit and heads off.

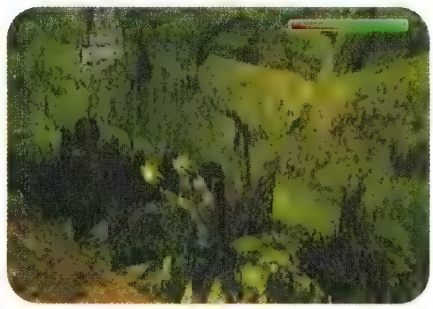
Drop down and get ready for the tiger. Go through the clearing and around to the left. Pass through the narrow passage and turn to the left to find some Flares and Small Medipack. Pull the lever in the passage and avoid the boulder. Go up the slope where the boulder came from and turn left. Pull the lever to open the gate. Go through the gate and a tiger will attack. Briefly go to the right through the bushes for Shotgun Shells. Return and another tiger will arrive. Continue along the path and you'll come to a clearing. Follow the monkey by crawling under the rock on the far side. Collect Savegame Crystal and kill the tiger. Head up the slope and drop off to the left at the end. Follow the monkey through the opening on the left. When you reach the spikes, carefully walk through them. Standing jump to cross the gap and grab the ledge. If you fall, you'll have to drop down to the dark section and walk through the spikes to get back to the clearing.



Pick up Small Medipack and then jump up and grab the wall in front of you. Shimmy all the way around to the right to reach a Savegame Crystal in the corner. Back track and then shimmy left using the large crack in the wall. Climb up and enter the dark tunnel. Go up to the right and you'll find a lever. Save your game here. Light a flare and pull the lever. Run down and out of the tunnel to avoid the boulder. Drop to the ledge next to the spikes and kill the tiger below. Drop and go through the open gate.

Go right through the next area, but watch out for the two boulders rolling in from the left. Jump in the river and swim through the entrance at the far side. Climb out and pull the two levers. Swim through to the next area and collect Flares from the centre platform. Jump to the doorway without torches and pull the lever. Return and go through the gate with the torches either side. You'll come to a flooded area with a Savegame Crystal in the far corner. Enter the hidden passage at the base of the right-hand waterfall. Climb the ladder and make your way to the top of the waterfall, pull the lever. Save your game, then dive into the main pool and swim under the ledge. At the end of the passage, quickly

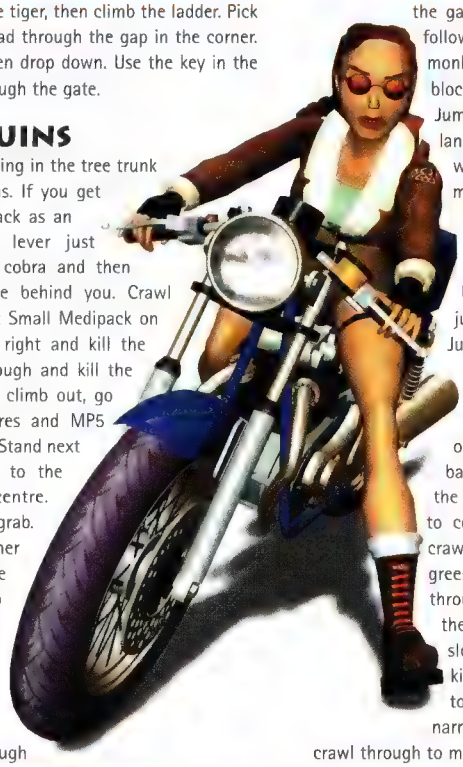




climb out and kill the tiger, then climb the ladder. Pick up Indra Key and head through the gap in the corner. Kill the tiger and then drop down. Use the key in the lock, then wade through the gate.

TEMPLE RUINS

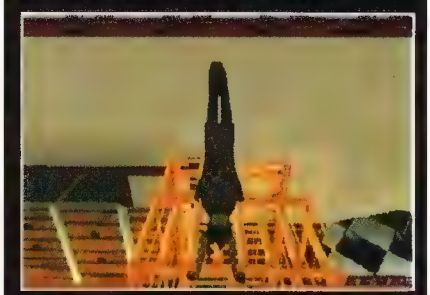
Go through the opening in the tree trunk and shoot the cobras. If you get bitten, use a medipack as an antidote. Pull the lever just beyond the second cobra and then drop down the hole behind you. Crawl through and collect Small Medipack on the left. Go to the right and kill the cobra. Continue through and kill the monkeys. When you climb out, go left and collect Flares and MP5 Clips from the steps. Stand next to the tree closest to the platform in the centre. Run-jump over and grab. Run-jump to the other side and land in the shallow part next to the wall. Go right and pull the lever. Head back along the wall and drop into the river at the first gap. Swim through the gate before the piranhas arrive and follow the passage to the end. Kill any monkeys and climb onto the furthest block at the bottom of the landslide. Jump to the ledge above and cross the landslide from the ledge. Make your way around the edge killing the monkeys. Collect a Savegame Crystal after the short passage.



You'll now be up above the river near the start. Jump to the branch sticking out and then run-jump to the ledge near the waterfall. Jump over to the ledge under the waterfall for Small Medipack from the base of the tree. Climb the step in the rock and walk to the other waterfall. Drop off the ledge backwards and grab onto the edge of the waterfall and shimmy right. Climb to collect some Shotgun Shells, then crawl to the end. Run-jump to the green ledge and kill the monkey. Crawl through the gap keeping to the left. Kill the cobra and then slide down the slope, head through the passage killing another cobra. Pull the block to the right of the statue to reveal a narrow gap. Save your game and then crawl through to meet Shiva.

HANDSTAND SHOW OFF

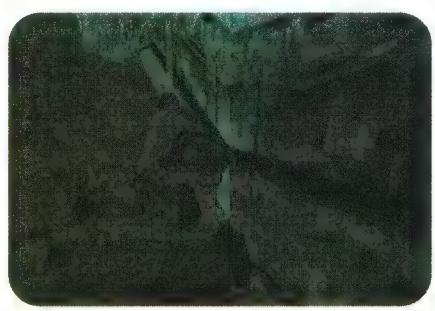
When hanging from the edge of a ledge or platform, hold R1 and press up to pull off a perfect handstand onto the ledge.

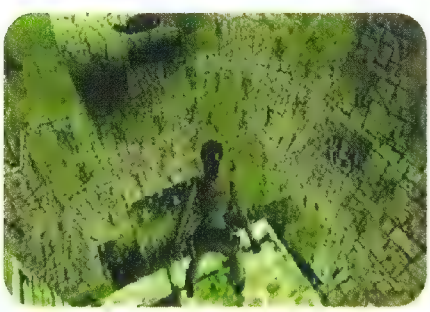


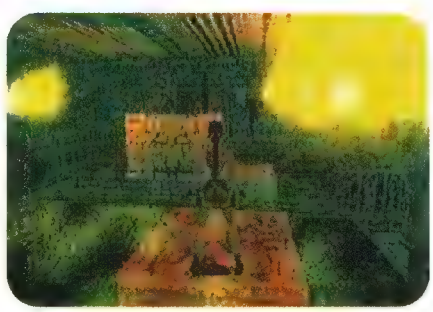
SHIVA

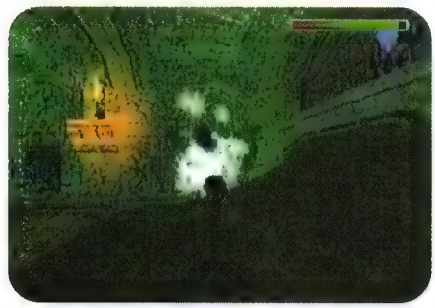
A statue of Shiva will come to life, with six arms and six sharp swords. You'll need to keep running and jumping to avoid being slashed and you can only inflict damage when Shiva's defences are lowered, or when he's shot from behind. There is a hole in the floor which you can use to catch your breath. If your energy gets low, then use a medipack to replenish lost health. When defeated, Shiva will turn back into stone.

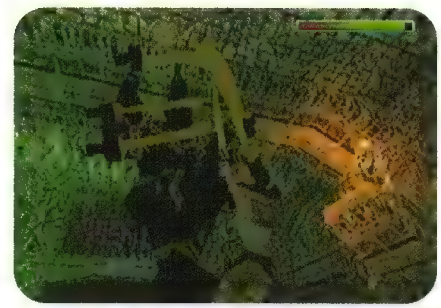
Collect Savegame Crystal and then drop down the hole in the centre. Pull the lever to open the gate above. Go down the now open passage. At the mud, stay left. You should just make it to the other side. Go up the slope so that you can run-jump to grab the ledge above the entrance. Kill the monkey and pull the lever at the end. Make sure you're in good health and then run through the gate. Jump over the blade and run to avoid the spiked walls. Kill the monkeys and then pull the lever on the far side of the room to open the gate above. Use the block at the bottom of the pillar to the right to reach the gate. Jump into the water and pull the lever. Dive down through the gate.

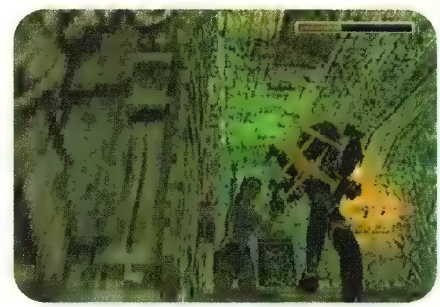








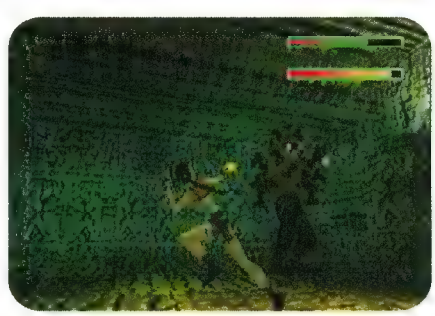


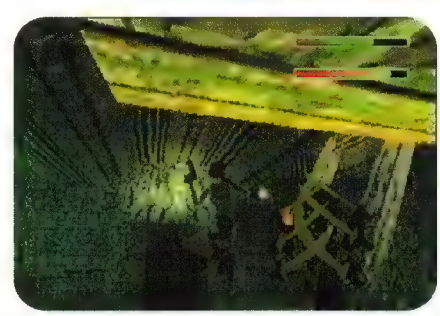


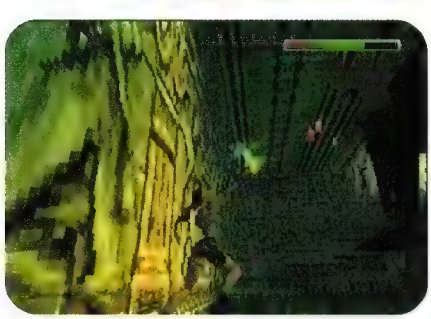
When the passage opens out, pull the two levers on either side. Head back and immediately surface. You'll now be in a hall. Collect a Savegame Crystal from the other side and then pull the three underwater levers. Climb out and the fire 'lights' up invisible platforms. Jump onto these to reach the lever. Pull it and then drop down and run through the gate next to the statue. If the gate closes, you'll have to pull the lever again. Go right and light a flare. You'll find a lever on the left-hand side. Save your game here.

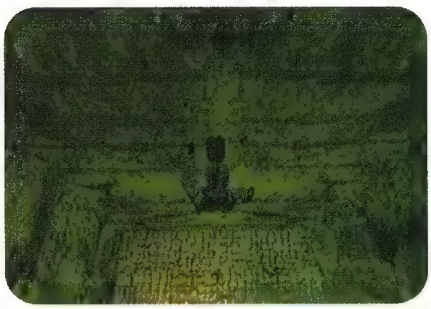
Pull the lever and sprint to the left, pick up Key of Ganesha and sprint back through the gateway to safety. Once the wall has passed by, go back and pick up a Small Medipack and some Shotgun Shells. Go back to the hall and wade through the mud, sticking to the right-hand side. Climb the slope and enter the passage to the right. Pick up Flares on the left. Up the stairs from here a boulder will roll. When it starts, run back to safety. At the top, take the right-hand passage (the easy route), kill the monkey and then pull the lever. Kill the two monkeys and collect a Savegame Crystal. Drop down the hole by grabbing the edge. Climb down to the bottom and drop into the room below. Use Key of Ganesha in the lock to the right of the large gate.

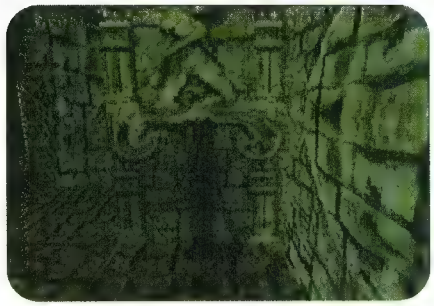
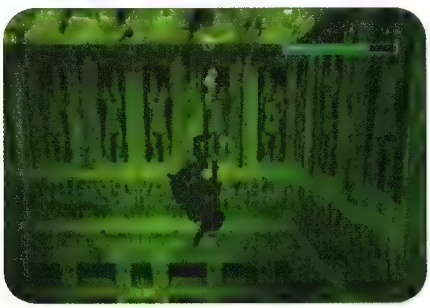
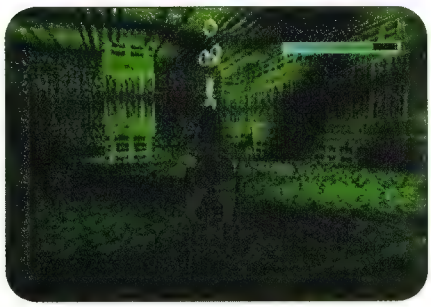
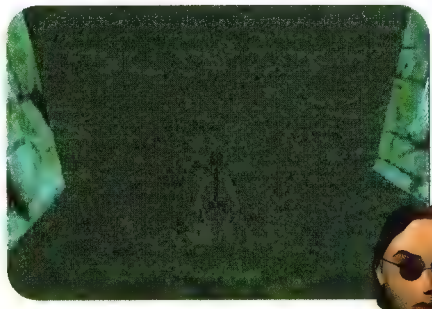
Go to the ledge where the Savegame Crystal was, and pull the levers. Go through the gate to the left of the main gate and follow the path. Cross the next room and into the area with fire breathing statues. Pull the lever on the far side and swim through the open gate. Keep to one side to avoid poison arrows. Wait for the tiles to fall into the water and then enter the next section. Go right and collect Small Medipack from the ledge. Swim to the far side and get onto the small ledge. Climb up the wall and then backflip to the ledge behind you. Use a run-jump diagonally to reach the left ledge. Jump to the ledge next to it and then jump and grab the wall behind you. Climb to the top and then jump to the platform above the first wall. From here, jump over and grab the ledge by the cobra. Move left, climb up and kill the cobra. Jump to the ledge behind and to the opening. Quickly drop and grab the edge to avoid the boulder. Avoid the arrows and blades and then run-jump to reach a Savegame Crystal. There is a block in the far right-hand corner – push it into the wall. There is another block to your right. Push it as far as it will go. Turn around and then push the first and third blocks on the right into the wall. Move the second block to either side. Pull the lever, turn around and go left. Quickly run down the slope, stay right to avoid boulders. Keep to the left and jump over the spikes to









land in the opening. Jump into the pit, staying on the right-hand side to land in the water. Go back until you reach a small pool with an underwater lever. Pull the lever and collect the second Key of Ganesha. Go back to the large gate and use this key. Jump the gap and climb the wall to the opening to avoid the spiked ceiling. At the top, kill the monkeys, collect the Savegame Crystal. Save your game. Go to the opposite side of the room and you'll find a long step. To the left is a block – pull it out and use it to reach the platform on the other side. Pull the levers and jump down. Run past the open gate, don't enter until the boulders have rolled.

THE TWO SHIVAS

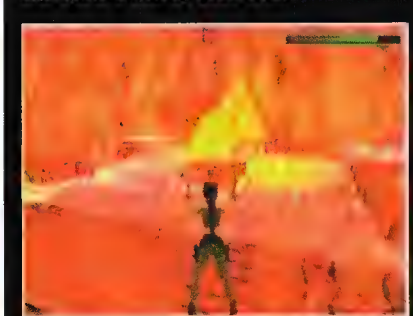
Enter through the gate and sprint down past the fire when the gates close. Fight another Shiva. When you kill him, examine the dead body to get a Scimitar. Climb up onto the ledge opposite the large gate and place the Scimitar in the hand of the statue. Kill the next Shiva and then place the two Scimitars in the hands of the statues to open the gate.

THE THREE KEYS OF GANESHA

Go through the gate and make your way to a large room. Another Shiva will attack. Defeat Shiva and collect Key of Ganesha from below the corpse. Also, collect Flares from the second dead. You should find another section with a Savegame Crystal. Save your game. Use the key in the nearest lock, then jump into the hole behind. Swim to either side of the spiked wall, pull the levers to turn the water off. Swim back to the hole, collect the second Key of Ganesha, return to the surface. Use the key in the second lock, head back to the main room. Approach the small gate, and it will open. Light a flare and then run in and pull the two levers. Quickly drop through the hole. Pick up the third Key of Ganesha and climb out. Put the key into the final lock and head up the steps. Run down the passage to a man on a raft...

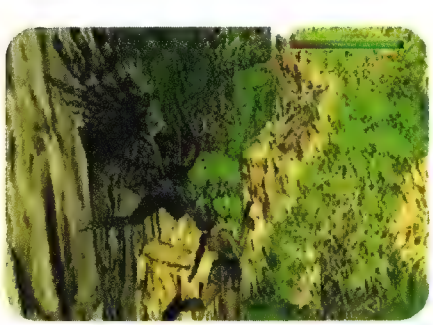
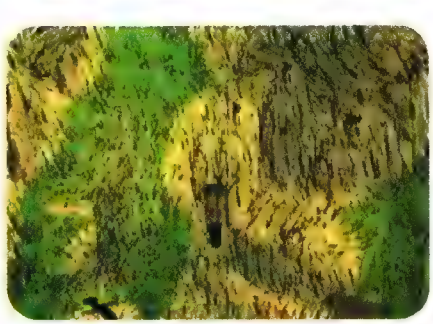
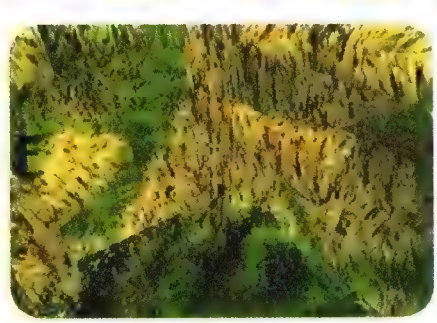
TONY

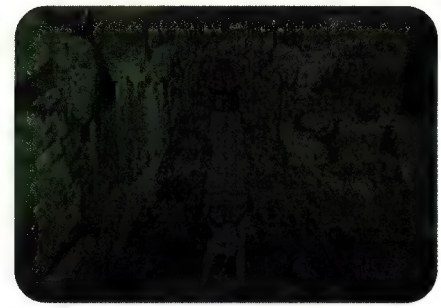
Lara arrives near a waterfall to see Tony floating past. After she fires off a few rounds, Tony causes some stone pillars to fall, nearly hitting our adventuring lass! After the dust clears Lara picks herself up and spots a nearby Quad Bike.

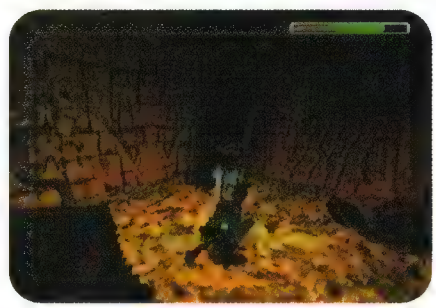


THE RIVER GANGES

Run around, hop on the Quad Bike. Drive it along and peg it over the ramp to cross the river. Drive through the cave, getting speed up to clear the jumps. Dismount when you come across a locked gate. Jump back over the last gap. Jump right and through the opening, killing the two cobras. Drop down the second hole, kill the two monkeys and open the gate with the switch. Go through and remount the bike. Take the bike through, collect a Savegame Crystal and then turn right. Just after the large jump, turn sharp right. At the





DR WILLARD

When Lara leaves the temple, Dr Willard approaches. He invites Lara aboard and she takes up the offer of a free ride. The doctor explains the history of the Infada Stone and tells her of three more pieces. Lara agrees to search for the other stones and has the choice of which country to take on next.

end, drop into the ravine to the left. Turbo to get across the gap at the end. Continue and up the narrow ledge on the cliffside. Stick to the ledge until you reach a small gap. Jump over and stop. From here Turbo to the far side of the river. Save and then go to the right, collecting a Savegame Crystal. Turbo to get to the other side again and then turn right. Ride to the bottom, turn right and collect a Savegame Crystal. Run over any monkeys and then dismount. Take the route which leads to a waterfall, and shoot the vultures. Jump into the pool at the bottom of the waterfall and onto the platform at the base. Jump through the waterfall and then follow the path.

CAVES OF KALIYA

The first part of this level is a maze, follow these instructions carefully! Take the left-hand route. Go left, then immediately right at the first split. When you have to crawl, go to the left, crawl through the gap on the right and collect Uzi Clips from the right. Drop down the hole opposite and run to the end. Crawl through the gap on the right and go left. Go right, then left and right through the gap. Take the second right and drop down the step. Continue through until you find a Savegame Crystal. Save your game before you attempt to collect it. Drop into the hole backwards and grab the edge. Drop into the pit below and find yourself surrounded by cobras. Crouch down and turn to face the two cobras next to the slope in the wall. Staying crouched, draw your guns and carefully kill these two. Once they are dead, move to the bodies and safety. Stand up and kill the other two. Walk towards the other end of the room, stay to the side and kill the next two without passing the narrow part of the room. Stand in the narrow section and a boulder rolls down from behind. Jump back to avoid it. Kill the rest of the snakes and enter the tunnel at the end. Crawl through to the right, pick up the Savegame Crystal and save. Slide down the slope to face Tony.

CONFRONTING TONY

You're surrounded by water, but Tony turns it into lava. Fire off a load of rounds into him whilst he's doing this. He'll now throw fireballs upwards which then explode above you. If you get touched by the flames, you'll catch fire and die horribly. Also avoid falling in the lava. The best method is to shoot and jump to the platform to the left when a fireball is thrown. Roll over and wait a short while, and then jump back to the first platform. Keep firing, and go back and forth between the platforms. Even with his powers, you'll soon kill Tony.

When you've defeated him, collect all Small Medipacks, Grenade Launchers and Grenades around the edge of the room. Collect the Infada Stone from the centre.

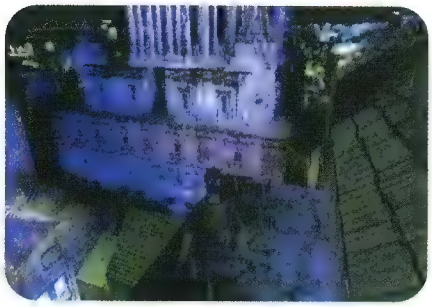
IT'S YOUR CHOICE

At this point you have the choice of which adventure to take on. This month we're covering London.

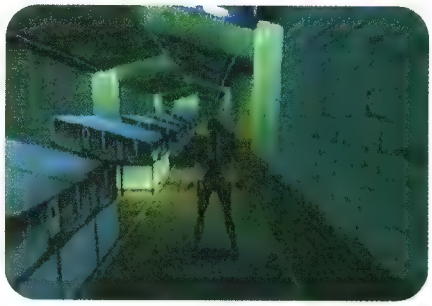
LONDON

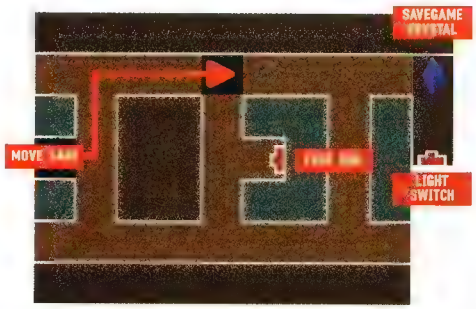
THAMES WHARF

High in the rooftops of the Thames Wharf, it's night and raining. You start on a walkway way above a small yard.



Turn around and drop onto the small ledge just below the end of the walkway. Run-jump across to the sloping roof and collect Small Medipack. From here, grab the gap and shimmy to the right. Climb and go up left. Vault onto the large step and round the corner. Jump over the fire and collect Shotgun Shells and jump back. Hop backwards and grab the edge above the fire. Shimmy right and drop down in the corner. Quickly run down the passage and away from the flames. Jump the gap and go to the end of the passage, picking up a Savegame Crystal. Drop into the room and kill the guard, flip the switch, head through the doorway opposite. Enter the passage at the far end, dive into the pool. Pull the lever and collect a Small Medipack and Shotgun Shells. Climb out and go all the way back to flip the switch in the first room again. Go into the hall and take the first passage to the right. Enter the water and swim into the shaft, past the propellers and surface. Climb out and kill the guard, followed by the two rats. Crawl through the gap on the right. Pick up the Small Medipack and drop down at the end. Turn around and enter the room in front.



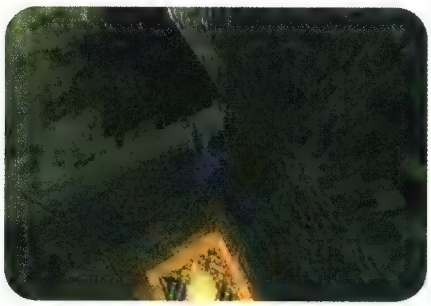


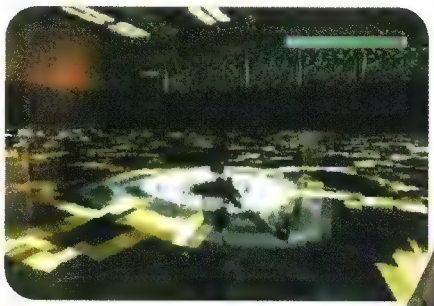
Jump up and grab the mesh, monkey swing to the other side. Drop onto the ledge and kill the rats. Follow the passage, collect Savegame Crystal and Large Medipack. Save. Go past the door and fall into the pool. Climb out, shoot the guard and go back to the switch room. Hit the final button, make your way through the pool at the far end. In the second pool, dive and swim through the tunnel at the bottom.

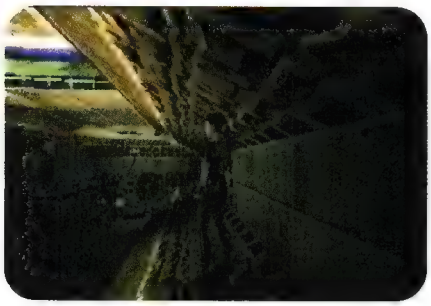
WELDING MACHINE ROOM

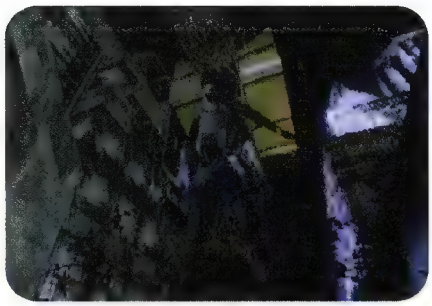
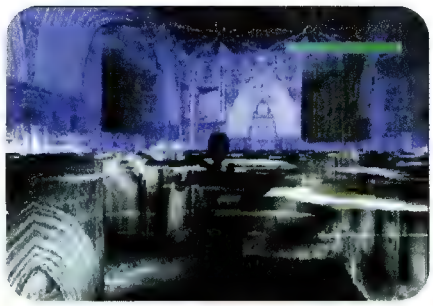
Avoid the welding machine to prevent being electrocuted. Go to the right-hand end of the room and collect Savegame Crystal, then turn the lights on. Go to the opposite end of the room. Pull the cage out and push it around to the position shown in our diagram. This will cause the fuse to blow. Exit the room and climb the wall.

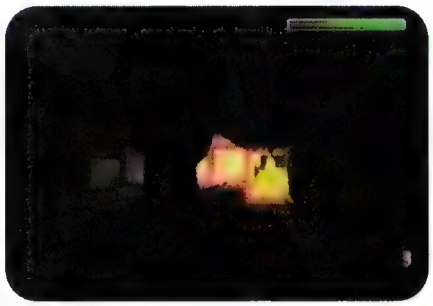
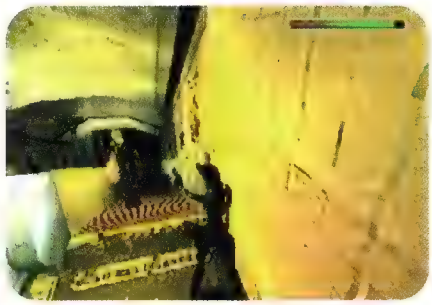
Press the now accessible button and kill the guard. Flip the other switch for a third time, go down to the farthest passage again. Swim through the pool and climb out at the passage to the left. Swim through the next (setting the alarm off), climb out. Kill the guard and go through to the small room. Push the button and go back to the now empty pool. Go left as you enter.







CATHEDRAL

Search the arches to find Small Medipack and Shotgun Shells. Climb out and kill the waiting guard, picking up Small Medipack. Nip round the corner and pick up Savegame Crystal. Save your game and climb the wall. At the top, walk through the barbed wire to the edge. Jump onto the ledge on the crane. From here use a running jump to grab the building to the right. Climb up the roof towards the dome. Kill the guards, go through the dome and drop onto the roof on the other side.

ALDWYCH

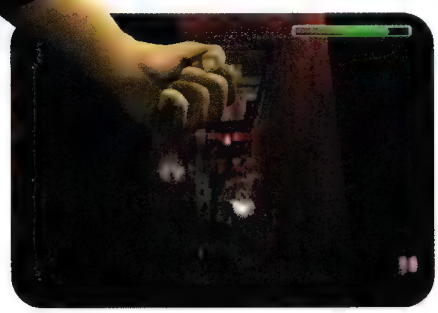
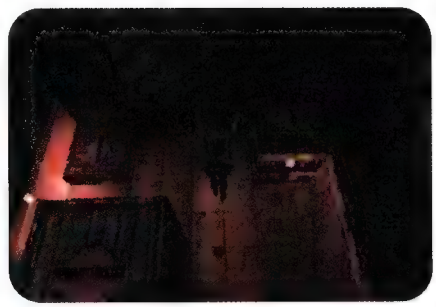
The place is empty and a few landslides have ripped through the tunnels, although trains are still active.

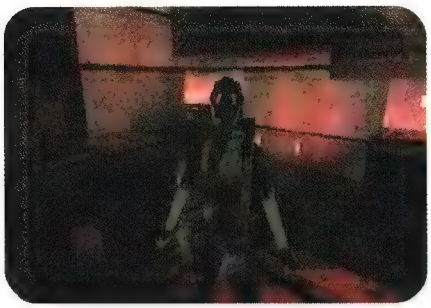
When you slide down at the start of the level, grab the third ledge and climb up to get hold of the Shotgun. Jump into the murky water below and climb into the stairwell. At the top of the third flight of stairs you'll see Savegame Crystal to the right. Shoot the barrier to break it. Climb the wall up to the top. Pull the block towards you. Go around the other side of the room and kill the spanner-wielder. Pick up Uzi Clips, Shotgun Shells and Flares, drop down through the hole to the booth. Kill the guy holding the torch and jump down. Climb the booth nearest the ticket office. Go through and down into the office. Pick up Maintenance Key and Large Medipack. Push the button and leave.

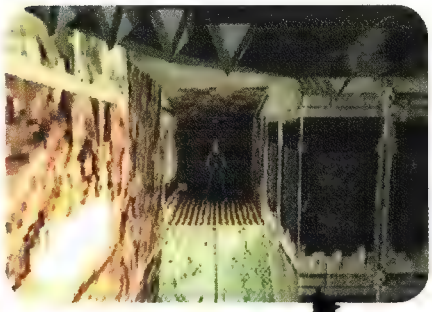
To the left are two sets of escalators, take the right and jump over the tracks. Through the arch, kill the man and dog. Go right, along the platform, use Maintenance Key to open the door. Enter and switch on the lights. Collect Small Medipack and Uzi Clips, go to back to the other end. Pick up Old Penny, back through the arch and then drop onto the track. Sprint down the blue tunnel to the left and enter the right opening before the train comes. Kill the men and climb onto the crate in front. Turn and go to the corner for Savegame Crystal. Vault up and kill the dog. Vault onto the crate in the corner in front of

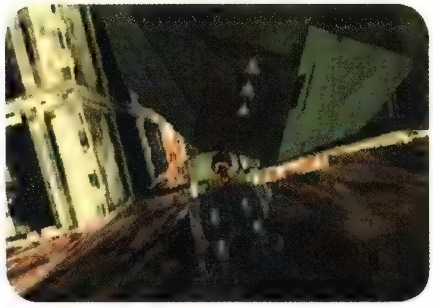
GUN FIGHT

Lara fights with one of the goons by the bells of the cathedral. After an intense battle she overpowers and interrogates him to find out what's going on. He tells her that a Miss Sofia Lee is employing him to kill people.

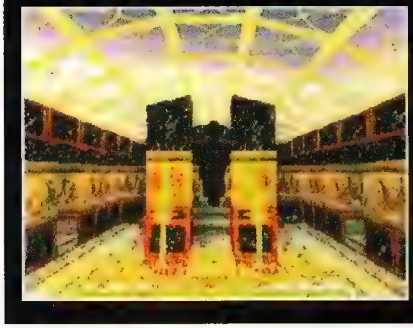






SWAN DIVE

Fed up of doing the old handstand? Then why not use a Swan Dive to gain much kudos? Simply hold R1 and perform a standing jump to look like a pro.



you, and run-jump onto the crate to the left. Run-jump over to the crate to your left and climb up. Backflip onto the small slope and jump to grab the wall. Climb and backflip when nearly at the top. Vault onto the crate behind you and kill the bad guy to get Small Medipack. Jump to the small ledge on the left and then run-jump over to the far side to collect Uzis. Drop and climb back up as before. Jump up and forward so that you can monkey swing around the corner. Drop at the end and onto the step at the bottom of the slope. Save.

DRILL ROOM

Hop backwards onto the slope and grab the edge, drop and grab the gap below. Let go and jump sideways to the left when you land as the ledge collapses. Jump when sliding to grab the gap on the other side. Shimmy over to the right and let go. When the ledge gives way, grab the edge of the slope below. Climb and backflip, turn in mid-air. Grab the slope, drop to the gap below. Drop and grab twice more and climb into the opening with Savegame Crystal. Collect the crystal and MP5 gun.

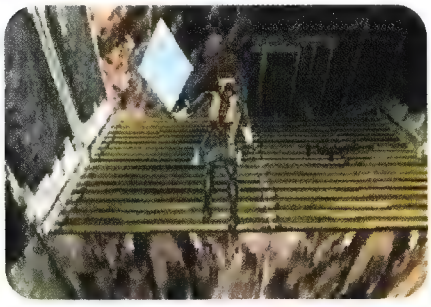
Slide down the short slope and climb up to a small pool. Go around the corner, collect Savegame Crystal and save. Climb the wall adjacent to the pool. At the top, wait for the flames to recede and then roll over. Turn around carefully and side-step right and vault up. Climb and then hop onto the sloping area. Go to the end, jump and grab the wall and climb a short way up. Backflip off and push the button to open the trapdoor. Jump back onto the wall and climb. Crawl across the top, picking up Uzi Clips as you go. Climb down the other side and follow the passage to the end. Drop through the hole back onto the station platform. Go back down onto the track, head down the tunnel into the crate room. Climb up as before up until you reach the ledge using the backflip from the wall. Turn around and note the open trapdoor to the right. Ignore this for now, monkey swing to the drill room. Climb across the top of the drill and jump up to the gap in the corner. Pick up Solomon's Key and follow the passage. Drop down and then again to the platform once more. Go back to the crate room and enter that trapdoor.

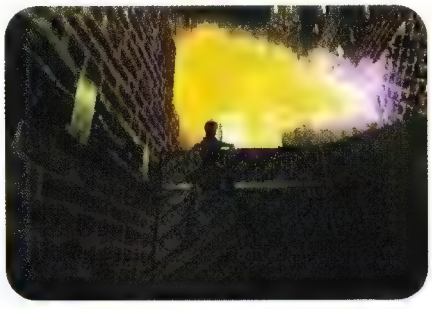
Round the corner and kill the dog and thug before entering the doorway. Stand on the weak floor to the right. Pull the block towards you and then climb out. Drop down the other side and follow the path along, climb out to the right. Go to the end and around the corner.

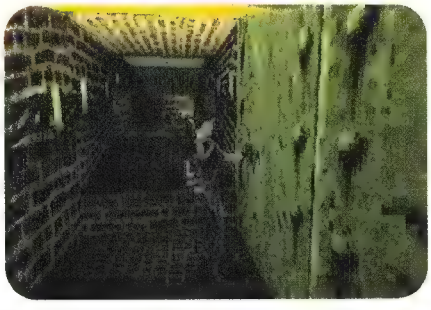
TIMED DOOR SECTION

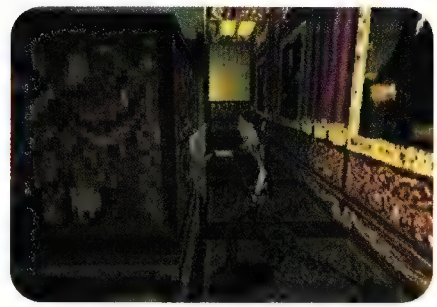
The two switches open doors in a room nearby. The doors remain open for a short period of time. Hit the switch on the right, wait for the doors to close, then press again. Quickly roll over and run up the slope to Lara's right. Go to the next room and enter the furthest door on the left before it closes. Once through, press the switch and slide down. Go to the right back to the two switches.

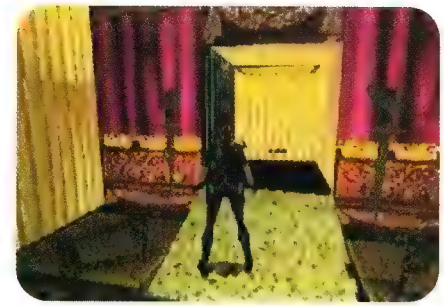
Press the right-hand switch again and this time enter the second door on the left of the room. Jump up through







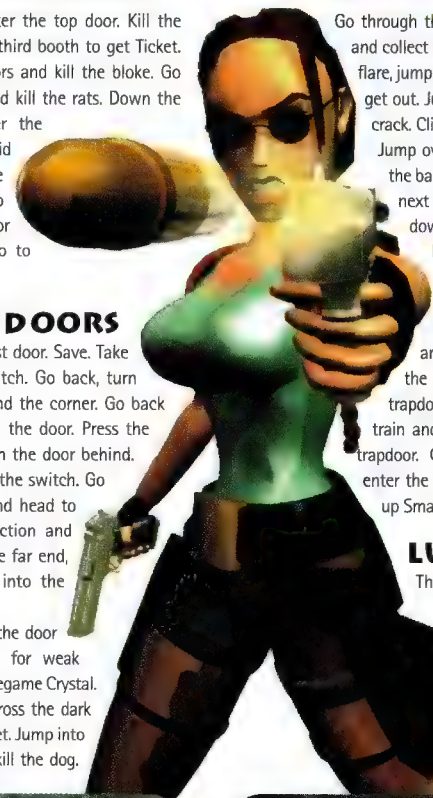




GEORDIE FREAKS

A thug grabs Lara by the arm and drags her to his leader. The leader explains that he and his mates are the results of failed experiments carried out by Miss Lee. The experiments left them immortal but without skin. He tells Lara that he'll help her out if she fetches some embalming fluid from the museum to prevent skin rot.

the trapdoor and push the switch. Drop at the end to get back to the two. This time, press the left-hand and enter the first door on the left. Go to the left and jump onto the step. Monkey swing across the pool and drop to grab the ledge. Collect Savegame Crystal, Shotgun Shells and the second Solomon's Key. Jump into the water and through the passage. Climb out and enter the top door. Kill the thug. Use the Old Penny at the third booth to get Ticket. Go down the left-hand escalators and kill the bloke. Go onto the platform to the left and kill the rats. Down the tunnel to the right and enter the second door on the right to avoid the train. Kill the guy with the bat, press the button. Go back to the track and enter the first door to collect Savegame Crystal. Go to the third door and swim.



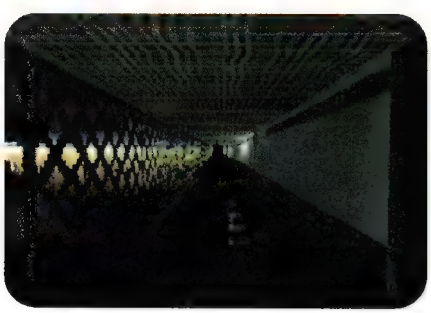
BUTTONS AND DOORS

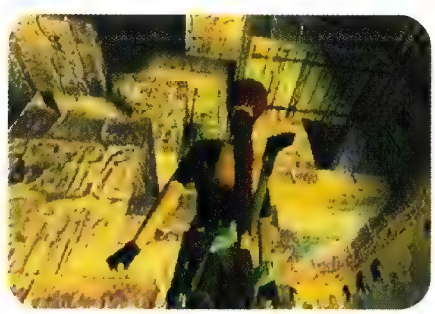
Press the button to open the first door. Save. Take the first right and push the switch. Go back, turn right and push the switch around the corner. Go back and take the first right through the door. Press the left-hand switch and go through the door behind. Take the second right and press the switch. Go through the door behind you and head to the right. Left at the next junction and then right at the next. Go to the far end, turn left past the candle and into the room at the end. Save.

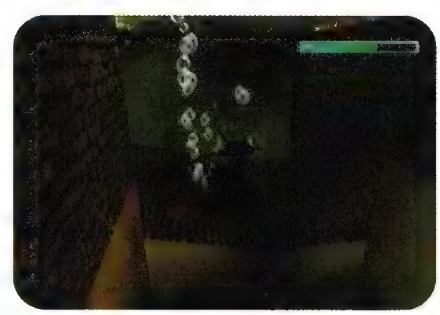
Use Solomon's Keys to open the door blocked by swords. Watch out for weak sections of floor and pick up a Savegame Crystal. Go to the open door and run across the dark section, pick up the Masonic Mallet. Jump into the main room, avoiding spikes, kill the dog. Go through the open door in the far corner and collect Flares from the right. Light up a flare, jump into the water, swim to the end, get out. Jump over and climb in the long crack. Climb back out and then vault up. Jump over to the other crack, climb to the barrier. Kill the rats and go into the next room. Kill the thug and go down to the right. Use the Masonic Mallet to open the door after the escalator. Press the button and drop down the hole. Shoot the thug on the right and drop down. Crawl through the gap and vault through the trapdoor. Press the button inside the train and then drop through the other trapdoor. Crawl through the gap, then enter the first passage on the right. Pick up Small Medipack and run to the end.

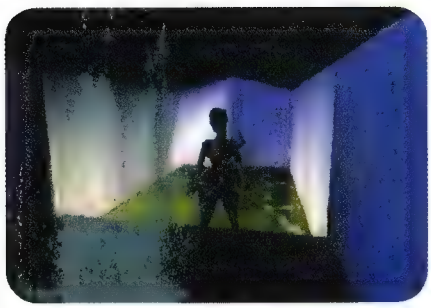
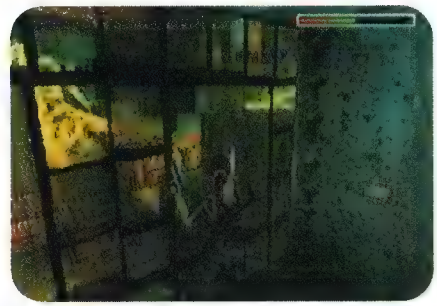
LUD'S GATE

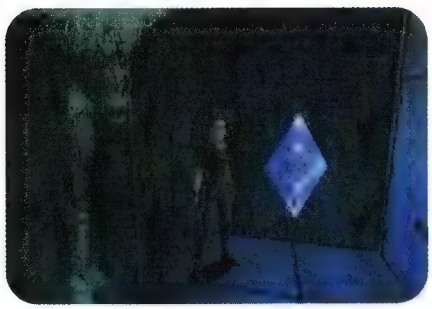
The thugs won't attack you here, so don't shoot them. Follow the gang member. Go straight ahead at the pools and through the passage. Pick up Large Medipack and go around the corner. Climb







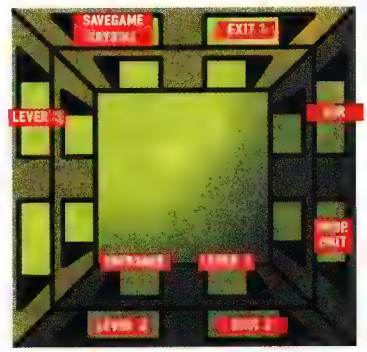





up the left-hand side of the wall and backflip to the wall behind you to collect Savegame Crystal, Shotgun Shells and Rocket Launcher. Continue up the wall, enter the gap at the top. Stand up halfway along, vault to the right. Pick up Small Medipack, drop into the room below. Kill the guard and move the block on the left. Push the button to open the door and kill the guard. Exit the room and take the first right.

EGYPTIAN PLATFORM ROOM

Climb onto the tallest step and jump to the ledge facing the door. Vault up and enter the small room. Push the block to cover the door and climb out through the ceiling. Go back into the main room and drop. Using the step in the corner, vault onto the large step blocking the main door. Climb onto the ledge and crawl through the gap to the right. Vault up, follow the passage back into the hallway. Go back into the far room and pull the block to the middle. Re-enter the platform room and climb onto the tall step. Run-jump and grab the slats behind you and collect Savegame Crystal. Drop down and do the same again, go to the right and crawl into the gap. Push the switch and drop. Get back onto the tall step and climb onto the ledge above you. Jump over to the ledge and push the switch. Go to the ledge below and climb up the wall and the door you've just closed. Go to the left at the top, drop onto the ledge. Save before attempting these next few jumps. Face outwards and run-jump over to the ledge on the left. Jump into the hole and go to the left. Pick up Shotgun Shell and Flares. Turn and jump across the gap. Go around the corner and stop. Hop backwards onto the slope and grab the edge. Climb up and backflip, twist in the air and grab the ledge. Climb up and go through the door. Slide down and you'll drop into the water below. Swim through the tunnel, going with the current.

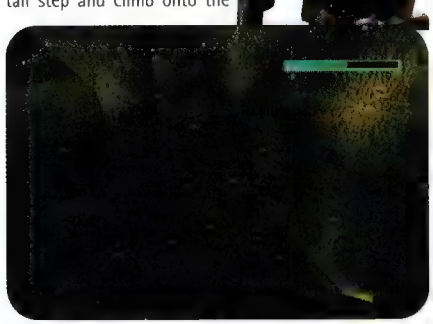
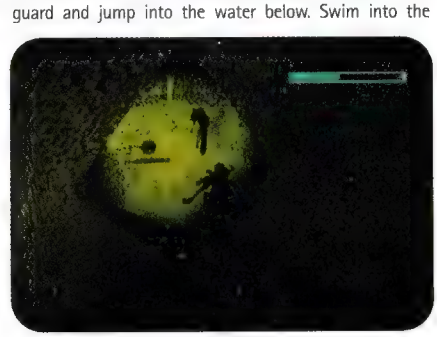
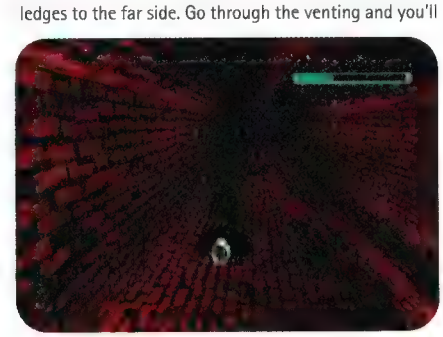


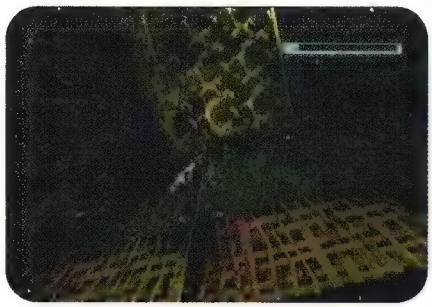
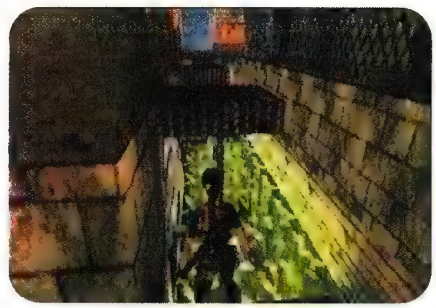
Climb out, pick up Harpoons and dive back in. Head along the other tunnel and pull the lever. Go back a short way through the tunnel and through the trapdoor. Vault and press the button. Go back into the water and through the door along the tunnel. When you reach the next area, go to the left and climb out at the end. Jump onto the crates and kill the guard. Jump across and pick up Boiler Room Key from his body and Harpoons on the crate. Jump back over the water and go to the far left corner. Vault into the opening and then go through the gap on the right at the end. Collect the Savegame Crystal and save your game here. Climb out and go straight ahead. Kill the guard and jump into the water below. Swim into the tunnel, avoid the harpoons and wait for the skin diver. Swim back up to the surface and climb out. Shoot the diver when he swims out of the tunnel. Go back into the underwater tunnel until you meet an alligator. Quickly turn around and swim back. Climb out again at the end and take out the beast from the water's edge.

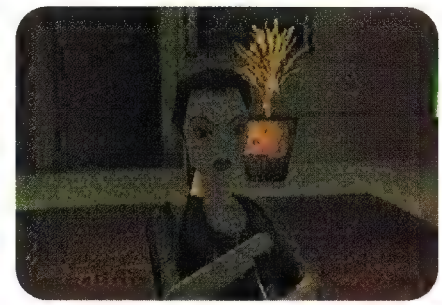
UNDERWATER ARCHWAYS

Go back through the tunnel and into the open area. Swim through the top left archway in the wall to the right, and up to the surface (see map). If you wish, collect the Underwater Propulsion Unit next to the dead diver. Swim back into the main room and go through the lower left archway in the left wall. Pull the lever and go back to get air. Swim out and go through the top right archway in the left wall. Pull the lever at the far end and go back once more for air. Swim into the main room and go through the top right archway in the wall opposite and collect Savegame Crystal. Pull the lever around the corner. Use the same 'coaxing' method as before to get rid of the divers. Save your game and re-enter the main room. Head through the top-right archway in the wall opposite (exit 1). Go through the trapdoor to the right and swim to the surface.

Climb out and jump into the water below the fire. Pull the lever and climb out. Run-jump across the ledges to the far side. Go through the venting and you'll



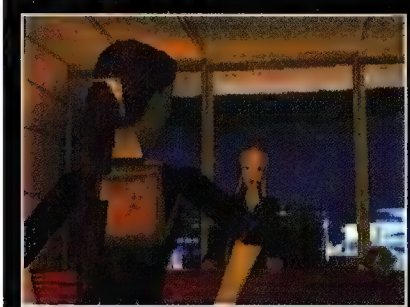
find three crushers. Get close to the first crusher and run under when it rises. Do the same for the other two and vault onto the step. Run to the end of the path and face the waterfall. Run-jump and grab the mesh above. Monkey swing to the gap in the wall by the waterfall, release and then grab the gap. Climb through and use Boiler Room Key in the lock. Go through the door, collect Savegame Crystal and press the button. Save and climb out.

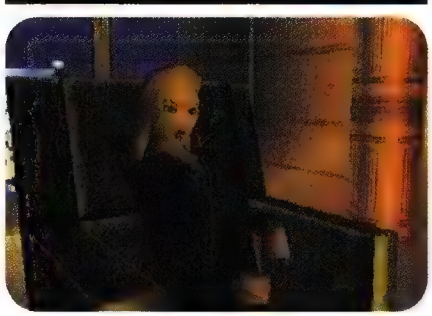
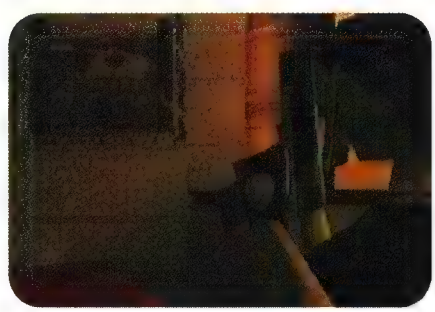
Dive down and go back into the large room. You'll encounter a few more divers and another alligator. The water has now risen so you can't get air as before, if you need air go back along the tunnel where you very first entered this room. Go through the red coloured arch (exit 2) opposite the first exit archway (exit 1) and swim up. Climb out and pick up a Large Medipack, cross to the other side. Face the swinging beams, stand up against the wall on the left. Jump to the first ledge when the beam swings right, ducking to avoid getting hit. Stand on the edge of the ledge and run-jump to the other ledge, taking care to avoid the beams. Run-jump over to the last ledge and then jump into the passage at the end.

Jump up into the venting to the left as you enter the passage. Follow the vent until you reach a deep shaft. Save then run-jump and grab the gap on the opposite side of the shaft. Drop to the gap and climb in. Follow the vent to the end, jump across the shaft and grab the gap on the other side. Climb in and follow the vent all the way.

LARA CONFRONTS SOFIA

Sofia tries to convince Lara to join her, but Lara has none of it. Our heroine tells of the test subjects she met in the underground and that she wants the artefact which Sofia has in her possession. Sofia grabs the artefact and legs it.



CITY

Lara has to take on Sofia, who has a trident which she uses as a weapon. Go through the door and you'll see Sofia on the other building. Don't waste ammo shooting at her because she's invulnerable.

When you enter the outside area, you'll see a shallow ramp. Climb the step at the top. Monkey swing to the platform behind. Drop off at the end and climb on top of the platform you've just been swinging from. Run to the right and press the button. Go back, picking up Small Medipack and climb through the trapdoor. Vault onto the ledge and run right, picking up another Small Medipack. Jump and grab the wall and then climb. Crawl through the gap and stand. Turn around and hop onto the ledge. Run-jump straight ahead to land on the platform further along. Shoot the fusebox on the wall to electrify the metal bridge to kill Sofia. DON'T cross the bridge, but run-jump back over the gap to the other ledge. From here, jump across to the other building, go left along the path and up onto the first step. Go to the right and follow the concrete path, jump down and you'll find a switch. Push this to turn off the electricity. Collect Eye of Isis from the bridge.

NEXT MONTH

Next month we'll take you through the last two sections, the South Pacific Islands and Nevada. We'll also tell you how to finish the climactic Antartica. Until then you'll just have to sit and struggle your way through Tomb Raider III without us...

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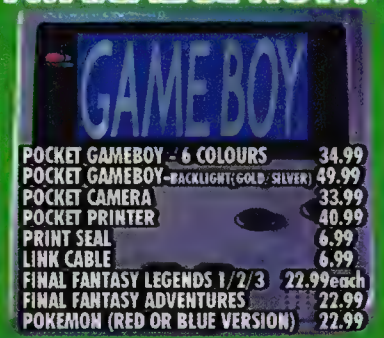

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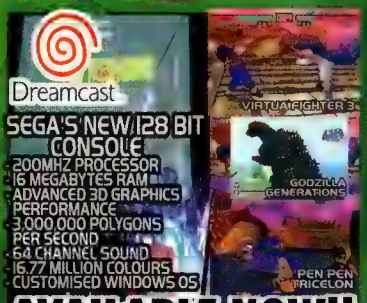

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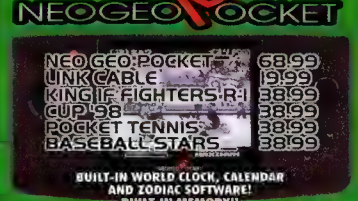

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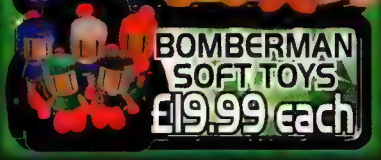

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Before Lara Croft and the real time 3D adventure, there was only one way to earn a name in the world of videogame iconography. Get yourself a platform to appear on, of course.

Jet Set Willy, Dizzy and Pitfall Harry all enjoyed minor celebrity status during the eighties as the leading lights in the world of videogaming. All three characters had one thing in common – they all starred in a platform game of some kind or another.

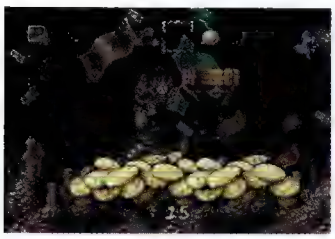
The situation hasn't changed either, whilst the aforementioned have packed it in and opened up a chip shop in some quiet seaside resort, a new generation have taken the reigns of videogame stardom – Sonic, Mario and Crash – again all stars of the humble platform game.

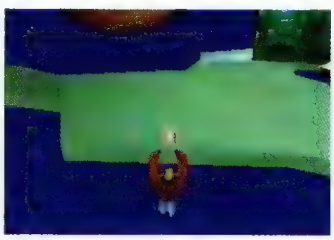
It seems that the only way to find a mascot for your company is to build a platform based vehicle around one, which is probably why PlayStation gamers are inundated with all manner of weird and wacky creatures, all with a curious ability to jump really high.

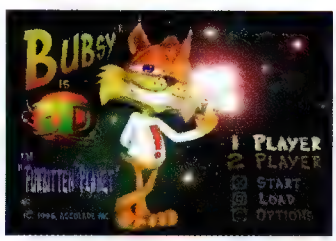
Still there's no denying that a platform game done well is as engrossing as any other genre, it's just a shame that out of the glut available, only a handful are really worth their salt. Which, of course, is where STATION comes in...

Our definition of...

So what is a platform game then? Well it obviously involves platforms of some kind, but how did we narrow the list down to real platform games? Well for a start, we cut out all of the adventure games such as *Tomb Raider* and *Medievil*. Why? Because these types of game, although choc-a-block with platforms, are not the purest form of platformer. They have other objectives than simple



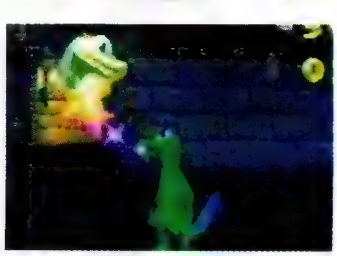


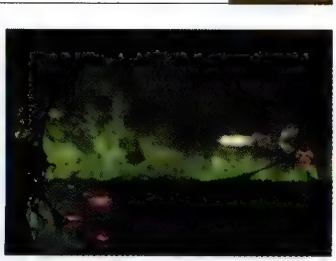


BLASTO — SONY		
Painfully slow blend of jumping and blasting.	65%	
BUBBLE BOBBLE — VIRGIN		
Two classic games. A little dated now though.	80%	
BUBBLE BOBBLE 2 — VIRGIN		
More bubble based action. Or is that bobble?	80%	
BUBSY 3D — TELSTAR		
Watch some paint dry instead.	45%	
CASTLEVANIA X — KONAMI		
For fans of the original series only.	82%	
CHEESY — OCEAN		
Oi, Ocean... No!	45%	
CRASH BANDICOOT — SONY		
3D and 2D scrolling platformer, good fun.	85%	

CRASH BANDICOOT 2 — SONY		
More platform adventures of Crash – nothing new.	82%	
CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED — SONY		
The best *Crash Bandicoot* yet!	86%	
CROC — CA		
Wannabe platform star ends up on the dole.	70%	
EARTHWORM JIM 2 — VIRGIN		
Very 16bit but still fun platform action.	72%	
FLOATING RUNNER — THQ		
Pathetic 3D platform stuff.	30%	
GEX — EMG		
Outdated 2D platformer. You have been warned.	50%	
GEX 3D — EMG		
Re-ignites the fires of the once fallen genre.	90%	

HEART OF DARKNESS — OCEAN		
Imagine Abe, and take away all the originality.	82%	
HERCULES — SONY		
Captures the spirit of its Disney movie origin.	79%	
HERC'S ADVENTURE — VIRGIN		
Old fashioned adventure. For retro fans only.	70%	
INCREDIBLE HULK — CIDOS		
Foul top down adventure, avoid at all costs.	25%	
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE — US GOLD		
Do we need another 2D platformer? err, nope!	82%	
JUMPING FLASH — SONY		
Intriguing 3D platformer that almost succeeds.	80%	
JUMPING FLASH 2 — SONY		
Improved visuals and gameplay, worth a look.	85%	





L SUPERSTARS

platform malarkey. So if a game contains too much combat or exploration, we don't see it as a platform game. The following list contains every real PlayStation platform game; the games where jumping and running come first and foremost over anything else.

High Jump Champions

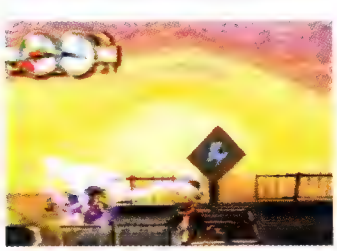
There are several games worthy of taking the STATION award for best platform game ,but none are more deserving than *Spyro The Dragon*. We could have chosen one of the admittedly superb *Abe* games. Both trips to Oddworld serve up more jumping and running than Sonic could shake a stick at, but the puzzling element does water the platform fun down a little.

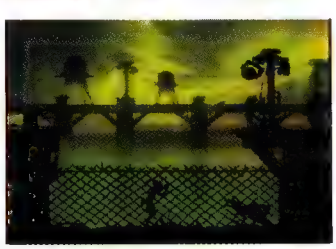
What about *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* then? Easily the best of the three Crash games but we reckon the Bandicoot is getting on a bit now and besides, the gameplay just isn't as omnidirectional.

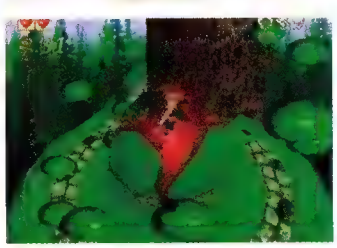
Gex 3D is near the top but although both are very similar games, *Spyro The Dragon* just beats the Gecko on account of its sheer addictiveness and real platform ethics. This means plenty of jumping and running with a sprinkling of exploration and combat. Plus the most genuine platform game visuals you're ever likely to come across.

So there we have it, for the moment a cutsey dragon holds the crown. Be sure though that '99 will bring a throng of new platform hopes to the PlayStation. So Spyro ain't sitting pretty yet.

KLONOA — SONY	Hardly taxing but an enjoyable '2.5D' platformer.	80%
LOST VIKINGS 2 — INTERPLAY	Mix of platformer and puzzle solving adventure.	60%
LOMAX — PSYGNOSIS	Lemmings inspired 2D platform. Why?	32%
LUCKY LUKE — OCEAN	Great visuals but lacks originality.	64%
MEGAMAN 8 — OCEAN	16bit platform action to be left on the shelf.	29%
MEGAMAN X3 — OCEAN	Same old story, see above for details.	29%
MICKEY'S WILD ADVENTURE — SONY	More 16bit platforming. Why bother?	45%
MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGICS — GT	No.	02%
ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS — GT	Superb graphics but a little too similar to the original.	90%
ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE — GT	The best platform/puzzler with a fart option.	90%
PANDEMONIUM — BMG	Scorned for pseudo 3D but still a decent platformer.	85%
PANDEMONIUM 2 — BMG	Same gameplay as original, with added psychedelics.	80%
PITFALL 3D — ACTIVISION	Lacks magic of the original Atari game, but worthy effort.	77%
RASCAL — PSYGNOSIS	Too easy, limited and boring, looks fantastic though.	52%
SKULL MONKEYS — EA	Claymation is fun for a while but won't it last.	57%
SPIDER — BMG	Pretty, fun and challenging platformer.	72%
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD — VIRGIN	Spot loses it in the 32bit world.	68%
SPYRO THE DRAGON — SONY	A colourful jaunt into the world of platforming.	91%
THE LOST WORLD — EA	Nice looking but poor playing.	61%
TRASH IT — GT	A big NO to this attempt.	32%
WILD 9 — INTERPLAY	Original, violent and highly entertaining.	88%







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MES

If music be the food of love, then some developers have stolen our hearts forever. But who are they, and more importantly how *do* they get those tunes?

Close your eyes and listen to the music. Something you might often do when relaxing at home, but not something we'd recommend when playing a level of *Crash Bandicoot 3*, for example. It may sound like a cursory observation, but it actually has a significance of sorts. After all, the world is full of young, talented, unemployed musicians – there's no reason that the audio quality of a game should be bland and uninteresting. In the past, of course, the technology simply wasn't up to it. Computer generated sound (before wavetable and cunning use of samples) was notoriously awful, and until the arrival of CD-ROM drive, pre-recorded tunes just weren't an option.

And once the precedent was set, gamers expected no more. If they received it, they were quids in.

That was until the PlayStation arrived. Although appealing to clubbers and the like with the installation of consoles into the Ministry of Sound in London, the real collision between the cultures of underground music and videogames arrived with the stunning collection of tunes used in *Wipeout* from Psygnosis in late 1995.

Since then games and music have enjoyed a healthy, and sometimes bizarre relationship. From the hip street sounds of Chemical Bros. and The Prodigy, to the extreme musical clashings of Pop Will Eat Itself (used in the game *Loaded* from Gremlin) and the weird karaoke-rap twist of *PaRappa The Rapper*, music in videogames had never been more important, strange or exciting.

"UNTIL THE PLAYSTATION ARRIVED, GAME SOUND WAS NOTORIOUSLY BAD ... THE REAL COLLISION BETWEEN THE CULTURES OF UNDERGROUND MUSIC AND VIDEOGAMES ARRIVED WITH THE STUNNING COLLECTION OF TUNES USED IN WIPEOUT FROM PSYGNOSIS IN LATE 1995"

YOU CAN EXPECT TO HEAR FROM THE LIKES OF FAT BOY SLIM (AGAIN, WITH SOME ALBUM TRACKS) IN THE SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED ROLLCAGE. WE'RE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO THE EXCITING PROSPECT OF WORKING WITH SASHA ON WIPEOUT '99. CARRYING ON THE WIPEOUT TRADITION VERY NICELY, WE THINK..."

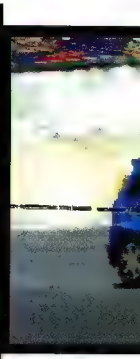
illed the radio star?

Videogames killed the radio star?

The Best PlayStation Album In The World Ever...

Fed up with cash-in compilation albums with only a few good tracks on them? We've all bought them, so we decided to get together a cracking selection of tunes that have appeared in PlayStation games over the years. Remember you saw it here first.

Ash – Lose Control – *Gran Turismo*
Blur – Song 2 – *FIFA: Road To The World Cup*
Chemical Bros. – Chemical Beats – *Wipeout*
Crystal Method – Busy Child – *N2O*
Dylan Ryhmes – Naked And Ashamed – *FIFA '99*
Fat Boy Slim – Rockafeller Skank – *FIFA '99*
Garbage – ? – *Gran Turismo*
Leftfield – Afro Melt – *Wipeout*
LionRock – Rude Boy Rock – *FIFA '99*
Pitchshifter – Genius – *Test Drive 5*
Pop Will Eat Itself – Kick to Kill (Remix) – *Loaded*
Manic Street Preachers – Everything Must Go (Chemical Bros. Mix) – *Gran Turismo*



GRAN TURISMO™
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

And now, that the PlayStation is the cool tool to own, bands and record companies in the real world aren't shy or stupid about lending tracks to a game. *Wipeout*, and its sequel, *Wipeout 2097*, both had music CDs containing top quality music from highly-respected dance acts, but after that it all went a bit quiet, until the arrival of *Gran Turismo*.

And with the runaway success of the game across Europe, there's no stopping the invasion of quality tunes on the world of PlayStation gaming, as obscure bands, such as Pitchshifter and Junkie XL, mix it up with global superstars like Garbage, Ash and Fat Boy Slim.

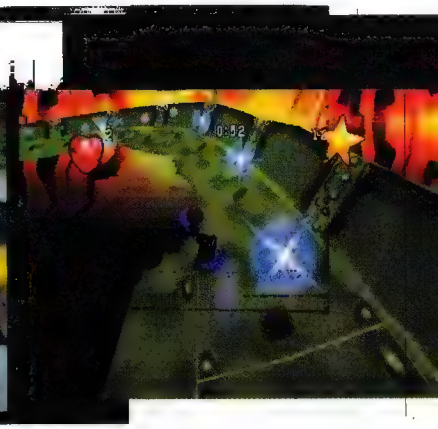
But just how did a situation like this come about? Is it a genuine mixture of cultures or just clever exploitation by ad-men? Do these pop stars really care about video games or is it just an inventive new device for selling records and/or the bands' image? And more importantly, where do we go from here?

Who Does What?

So just how do superstars like Garbage get their music onto a PlayStation game? The process is, of course, complicated and compelling.

We talked to Andy McIntyre from Infectious and Mushroom Records (the homes of Ash and Garbage respectively) to find out some more info.

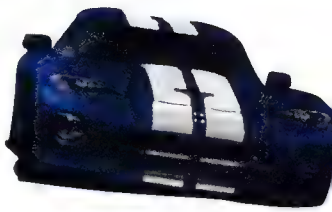
ANDY MCINTYRE: **'We service all our music to companies like Sony to keep them up-to-date with our roster, in the hope that they will have projects**



that our bands will be appropriate for. In the case of Gran Turismo I was approached by Sean Kelly at PlayStation marketing, who was interested in using a Garbage track as part of the soundbed. At this point I realised that we had another couple of tracks that would be perfect, and suggested the Ash track 'Lose Control', as well as a couple of songs by some of our other bands that didn't make it onto the final cut.

I then approached the bands with Sony's proposal. We're a fairly small label and pride ourselves on the complete control our artists have over their careers here. As the game was fantastic... we cut a deal and gave Sony clearance to use the tracks on the game. PR wise, games like Gran Turismo can be really successful for us. In addition to providing an additional source of income for the band they enable us to reach a whole new audience of potential fans... I would envisage computer games figuring more and more in record company marketing plans.'

So from that we can glean that it was essentially the idea of the marketing men, right? Well, yes, when you're dealing with a project this big (and Sony knew they had a big hit on their hands long before the game was released in Japan), money is the key. And the marketing men control most of the money. So, we followed the trail to Sony and spoke to the man responsible, Sean Kelly.



SEAN KELLY: 'I was European Producer for Gran Turismo, which primarily meant looking after the

PHOTO: G. FEAR

PHOTO: JOSEPH CULTICE

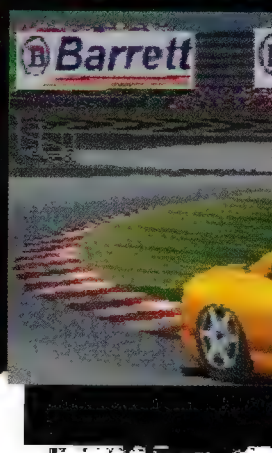
Videogames killed the radio star

THAT'S THE EA TO DO IT

Although games like Gran Turismo and Wipeout play up the image of the cool soundtrack, it doesn't mean that other companies don't exploit top tunes of the day to add some spice to their games. And when you've got games as big as the FIFA series, you like to add a little bit of audio panache as the icing on the cake.

In Electronic Arts' most recent game, FIFA '99, tracks from stars like Fat Boy Slim, LionRock and Dylan Rhymes can be heard adding their own special upbeat musings while you choose your options from the various menus and things. They've done this thing before with other FIFA titles, and the understatement carries well.

You don't have to make the music an integral part of the game or the PR, sometimes you can just stick it in for a bit of fun.



SLIM]

Videogames killed the radio

"And now that the PlayStation is the cool tool to own, bands and record companies in the real world aren't shy or stupid about lending tracks to a game..."

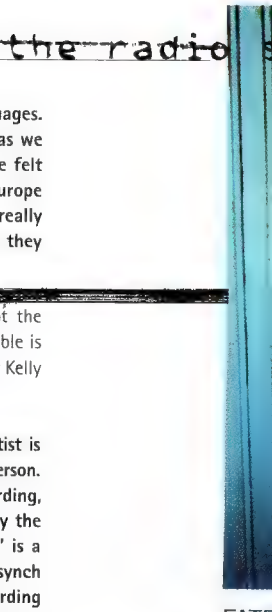
conversion from Japanese NTSC code to a PAL version in five languages. We recognised that GT was going to be huge pretty much as soon as we saw the first code, about six months ahead of Japanese release. We felt that the only thing that might generate any negative comment in Europe was the music – it was perfect for the Japanese release, but not really appropriate for our territories. We discussed this with Japan, and they agreed to let me put together a new soundtrack for Europe.'

All very easy so far isn't it? You've got the game and you've got the thumping music, all you need to do now is put them together. The trouble is that someone, or quite a few people, want paying for it. So we asked Mr Kelly just what kind of money was involved and who gets it.

SK: 'A song's author is entitled to some money and the recording artist is entitled to some money.' Sometimes, of course, these are not the same person.

'The next element is a "synchronisation fee" for the actual recording, which is completely arbitrary, and dependent on the artist. I dare say the synch fee you'd pay for the Mike Flowers recording of 'Wonderwall' is a hell of a lot cheaper than the synch fee for the Oasis version. For the synch fee, you can often do a buyout, which is paying the owner of the recording rights a fixed sum. But often you'll get quoted stupid figures – I was once quoted a figure of £100,000 to "buy out" a track for a football game I was developing. It didn't get used, of course.

The alternative is to do a royalty deal for x pence per game sold. For us the buyout is easier to manage – when you've got twelve tracks on a game, it's a pain to be doing twelve different royalty statements every few


FATE

"ONCE ALL THE GROUNDWORK IS DONE, YOU'VE GOT THE GAME AND YOU'VE GOT THE THUMPING MUSIC. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS PUT THEM TOGETHER. THE TROUBLE IS THAT SOMEONE, OR QUITE A FEW PEOPLE, WANT PAYING FOR IT..."

ARE YOU ROYALTY?

Now, mathematicians among you may find this the easy part of the feature. The rest of us normal human beings might have some trouble. But stick with us, the results are worth it.

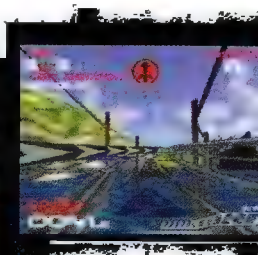
We would also like to point out that although the figures we received to calculate the royalties are correct, we have no idea how much Sony sell their games for on average, so this isn't an exact figure. More a very educated guess.

The first calculation is 70% of the dealer price. This is the price the shop pays Sony for the game. On a £40 game, we reckon the dealer price is about £26. So, 70% of £26 is £18.20.

Of this figure, for non-music games with more than 6 six songs on them (Gran Turismo is one of these), the royalty payment is 6.4%. So, 6.4% of £18.20 is £1.16. But because the PlayStation is a new format, it's entitled to a funky discount which last year was 40%. So, you take 40% from £1.16 and you're left with £0.70.

So, every copy of Gran Turismo sold creates £0.70 in royalties. Not that good really is it? But hang on, check out the news section this month and you'll see that GT has now sold 2 million copies in PAL territories (where the soundtrack is used). So, that's £1.4 million pounds in royalties.

And that's a lot of money in anybody's language. And with 10 tracks on the soundtrack, that's £140,000 on average per band per track. Especially good if you're generally less successful than other bands used in the game, like Feeder, for example.



Videogames killed the radio star?

IT'S A CONCEPT ALBUM

It's worth pointing out that soundtracks like GT are the beginning of a different kind of phenomenon than most other games. Whereas GT was a game before the music, games like Wipeout and Wipeout 2097 were conceived as games heavily reliant on their soundtrack from the inception and design by the programmers and software company involved – it also helped that Psygnosis were owned by Sony at the time and obviously had some influence in the music marketplace.

With the rising profile of games, and music being a more commonplace occurrence, we'll see the use of bands increasing; it's worth noting that, at the moment, companies are not jumping on the bandwagon and trying to create a cool soundtrack for a game, but are more interested in the general concept behind the game and finding a musical style to fit.

We can only hope that this kind of commitment remains, or it won't be long before the PlayStation market will be full of games overrun with music of differing quality.

months, and keeping track of everything. But, from the record labels point of view, if you're on a royalty, even if it's only something like half a pence per unit, on a game like GT or Tomb Raider that does millions of units, it can add up pretty quickly. The downside is if the game goes out and only sells 50,000 units.

BOY SLIM

GRAN

'Gran Turismo was a mix of royalty and buyout.'

As you no doubt realise, there's a fair bit of money involved in all this wheeling and dealing, but to work it all out becomes a bit complicated, so we've decided to explain it all in the handy boxout later on. Let's just say that it sure is worthwhile getting your song to appear on a game that sells as many units and has a profile the size of *Gran Turismo*.

But what's next for the PlayStation? Well, Sony are, of course, working on games like *Gran Turismo 2* for release later this year, and fools they are not. Although nothing specific has been mentioned several top acts are being considered for inclusion on this and many games.

Psygnosis, the company responsible for starting all this and who still see using music as a big part of the right kind of game, are a bit more open about upcoming titles and you can expect to hear from the likes of Fat Boy Slim (again with some album tracks) in their soon-to-be-released *Rollcage*, as well as the exciting prospect of working with Sasha on *Wipeout '99*, carrying on the *Wipeout* tradition nicely, we think.

But whatever tracks do appear, you can bet that not only do Sony have the clout to bring you the big names, but that other software companies are beavering away, listening to all sorts of new bands and trying to figure out where the next big thing is coming from. The future's looking good and PlayStation games will never sound the same again.

IT'S ALL HOW YOU RELATE TO IT

As music use in games becomes more and more hyped, its use in the world of Public Relations is inevitable. And sometimes, you might even be attracted to the game merely because of the funky people who wrote the music. Imagine if someone lined up an exclusive Prodigy track that was only available with the game. We all know someone that would buy a game like that just for the track, don't we?

And as the connections between the music and game worlds become more blurred you can expect to see a lot more advertising like that for one of Psygnosis' latest releases, Psybadek.

Much like the artwork for the game, the advert uses funky artwork and imagery to try and give it that cool hip '70s disco theme. And although it's small, the ad plays up the use of Bentley Rhythm Ace and David Holmes tracks in the game.

Station

Your monthly handle on the changing face of PlayStation gaming

News Index: PlayStation 2 speculation [page 116] Final Fantasy VIII [page 117] Metal Gear models [page 118] Premier Manager '99 Eye Candy [page 119] Alan Shearer exclusive art compo [page 120] Square and Namco make Ergheiz – Tech Bits [page 122] Barbie on PlayStation ? – Nintendo offer renewed competition [page 123] G-Police 2 Eye Candy [page 125]

PlayStation 2 Hardware Speculation Continues

Recent rumours to have leaked from Sony of Japan include the main storage device for the PlayStation 2. Originally thought to be DVD based purely for storage and reasons of video quality, it now appears that Sony is considering it's youthful Recordable MiniDisc format as the storage medium for software. Those in possession of a MiniDisc deck will already realise that that they are rewritable digital quality cassettes. If the format was used for the PlayStation, it would mean that – much like Nintendo's canned 'Bulky' drive – the discs could save vast amounts of game data. It may also be able to store games that are downloaded from the internet, as the console is now firmly believed to have an internal modem.

The prospect of that is unlikely to have much relevance outside Japan, however, as Nintendo SNES games have been downloadable via satellite for the past couple of years and American retailers have always preferred selling their games in stores. The internet function will be used mainly for email and general internet surfing. A survey of US publishers recently confirmed that the vast majority of firms want the PlayStation follow up to be released in the autumn of the year 2000, rather than 1999.

This hi-fi MiniDisc set up could resemble PlayStation 2

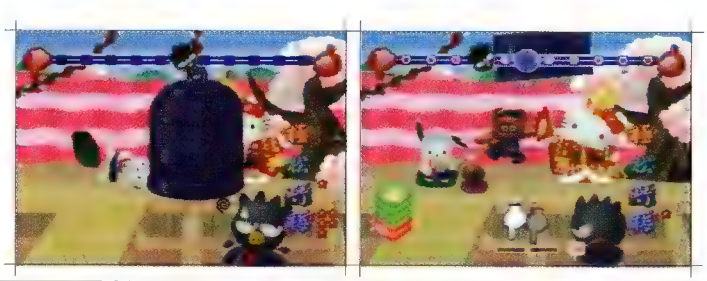
Dreamcast Hits The Shelves

Sega's new Dreamcast console went on sale on 27th November with four main games released including *Virtua Fighter 3*. The conversion of Sega's beat 'em-up didn't seem as shockingly good as many gamers hoped it would be. The eagerly anticipated *Sega Rally* failed to go on sale for the launch, meaning a vital advantage for Namco's *Ridge Racer 4* which was released during the following week. Sony failed to release details of PlayStation 2 prior to the launch and is instead hoping that titles like *Final Fantasy VIII* will quell the demand for the machine. UK Importers are currently charging around £400 for a Dreamcast.

BETA ZONE

TITLE: KITTY THE KOOL
PUBLISHER: IMAGINEER
RELEASE: TBC

Following *PaRappa*'s swaying trail of bizarre beats, the Japanese game *Kitty The Kool* is an even stranger 'button press to the beat' game starring a Japanese cartoon cat called *Kitty*. A UK release of the game is unlikely, but fans of *PaRappa* who have an understanding of Japanese and a need for wacked out weirdness such as this should consult their local importer.



iNFO STATION

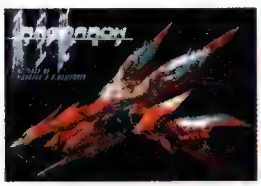
No Game For You, Sir
The Southampton branch of Electronics Boutique failed to sell a customer a game when he took the game to the counter and handed over cash. He couldn't use the till, apparently.

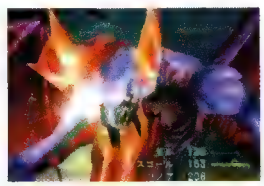
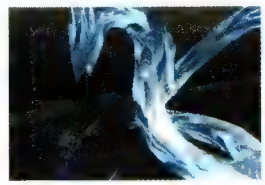
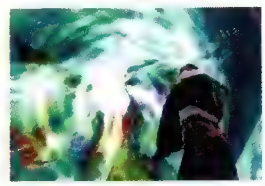
Sony Told Off
Sony has been ordered to alter its licensing policy and prices for third party software companies by the European Commission - see INSIDE for more details on the whole situation.

Codemasters Hit The Big Time
Micro Machines creator, Codemasters, is due to become a $100 million company this year after the Platinum re-release of *TOCA* and chart superstars *TOCA 2* and *Colin McRae Rally*.

Final Fantasy VIII Released In Japan

Square's February 11th release for Final Fantasy VIII is set to go ahead as planned despite the delayed debut of the compatible PocketStation. The intro scenes we've witnessed, before the game enters into unexplorable Japanese sections, is a supreme piece of animation showing the main characters amidst huge hollywood explosions and glittering light shows. The John Williams style classical score stomps along and the in game graphics exceed those of *Parasite Eve*. On the same day, Square's *Chocobo Dungeon 2* - a basic children's RPG – was released featuring the inflated birds and an extra bonus disc. It contains previews of forthcoming Japanese Square games and downloadable game saves for previous Square titles such as *Final Fantasy VII*. The use of these saves are still a mystery but are thought to be a little more than game cheats. A September '99 release is expected in the US market with the UK following soon after.



Sweet Nothings

This month's nuggets from the world of PR speak:

"When players progress to an area their sole objective is to kill as many players as possible whilst not being destroyed themselves in the process."

3SIXTY – CRYRO INTERACTIVE

"The *Zelda*-like gameplay in combination with the lush Manga style graphic animation has produced a challenging epic adventure."

MONKEY HERO – TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

"Magic powers destroy enemies with 3D effects: Panzer Lazer spell, Ice Cube and Mine Bomber woman."

DREAMS – CRYO INTERACTIVE

"Classic gameplay! – Here at STATION we beg to differ, football is going wrong, it's going etc"

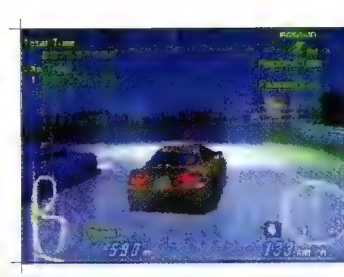
SENSIBLE SOCCER – GT INTERACTIVE

TITLE: *TRON NI KOBUN (*WORKING TITLE)
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: TBC

Highlighting how far the Japanese game scene is ahead of our own, a pseudo follow up to *Megaman Legends* – reviewed this issue – is due out in Japan in Spring. The title appears to feature new characters, with an enhanced graphics engine and more cinematic sequences. As if to avoid further criticism, Megaman has actually taken a back seat in this game and it should hopefully improve on the lacklustre 3D cash in of *Megaman Legends*.

TITLE: RACING LAGOON
PUBLISHER: SQUARE
RELEASE: TBC

Spurred on by the sub games in their *Final Fantasy* series, Square have produced a racing RPG hybrid with distinct Anime influences. Early shots look vaguely promising, with characters conversing with each other both before and after races. There is a central story that runs through the game, à la *Rival Schools*, but being in Japanese, not a great deal makes sense. Just like the title, then.



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Grandoise Turismo

GT has now sold a huge 2 million copies in PAL territories, making it the best selling PlayStation game ever in the mainly European domain. 309,000 copies have been shifted in Blighty, which should nudge up towards the half million mark for the whole year's sales. Pretty impressive by anyone's standards we reckon.

Lara With Balls

Lara Croft and the *Tomb Raider* logo are now emblazoned on a rugby team's shirts, in a clearly embarrassing move for the unfortunate models of the garment. The Kew Ocassionals Rugby Football Club are the recipient party. Poor souls. Their attitude towards this isn't yet known sadly but they're probably mad.

PocketStation Held Back

The proposed 23rd December release for the PocketStation has been put back by one month due to production not being able to meet the demand. Bizarrely, both *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Ridge Racer 4* boast compatibility up to two months before Japanese gamers can buy the PocketStation.

Metal Gear Plastic Solids

Toy producer McFarlane Toys, of Spawn fame, have released a collection of *Metal Gear Solid* miniatures featuring popular characters from the game such as Meryl and Solid Snake. The figures are six inch high creations, and should be available from your local importer for around a tenner. The office verdict is that they look quite convincing, although asking to order a six inch Revolver Ocelot over the phone may cause a few sniggers.

Wipeout Returns

Despite having massive problems with the development team, a further *Wipeout* game is in the making as we speak. A fully fledged *Wipeout 2* game has been the aim of the publisher for some time with *2097* intended as a stop gap. Strangely, the title is provisionally titled *Wipeout 3* meaning that the game should be due for a more radical overhaul than first thought, perhaps due to N64 competitors *Extreme-G* and *F Zero-X* offering a substantial challenge. We should have first shots next issue, and more details to accompany them.

TITLE: 3SIXTY
PUBLISHER: CRYO
RELEASE: APRIL '99

The company responsible for bringing the film licence *Virus* our way are also releasing this racing game which follows in the footsteps of driving based shoot 'em-ups like *Wipeout*. The action is water based and varies from a vastly flooded London to dry seabeds. The developer, Smart Dog, has just released the pleasing *All Star Tennis*, so hopefully the title should be a little more promising than it seems at the moment.

TITLE: WING OVER 2
PUBLISHER: JVC
RELEASE: 2ND QTR '99

Players of the original will remember this *Starfox* inspired combat game as a more complex alternative to *Air Combat* and it's already looking much more promising than last year's *Air Combat 2*. Suspect Anime pilots and in depth missions lend the title a more tactical feature. Should appeal to all flight buffs with dual stick controllers. The strange Japanese flight squadrons are still in here, with Anime instructors and tutors helping you during missions.

EYE CANDY

Keegan Terminated

This curious image displays the fact that Gremlin's *Premier Manager '99* is endorsed by none other than Mr Kevin Keegan. He takes the main role as The Terminator in the sequel to the former number 1 hit. When star players need to 'vanish', the laser eyed Keegan will shoot deathly beams towards the talented ones. This, of course, is a lie. This conceptual piece of inspirational art does, in fact, portray the fact that Kev has moved into the digital age by lending his moniker to the management game.

iNFO STATION

Paperboy Reborn

High Voltage Software is working on an update of Atari's classic *Paperboy*, while the original arcade game is available on Atari's *Greatest Hits 2*. STATION is delighted, as the prospect of chucking newspapers through house windows and at juvenile cyclists make us smile.

Final Fight 3D

Capcom has developed a 3D version of 1988s *Final Fight* arcade game running on PlayStation System 11 arcade hardware. The coin-op is currently going through a testing phase at an amusement arcade near to Capcom's Californian HQ.

RC Stunt Copter Delayed

Shiny Entertainment's *RC Stunt Copter* has had some fairly strange alterations made to it. The missions will now vary from the credible to the bizarre – such as rescuing children – and there's even a commentator narrating your progress which is bonkers.

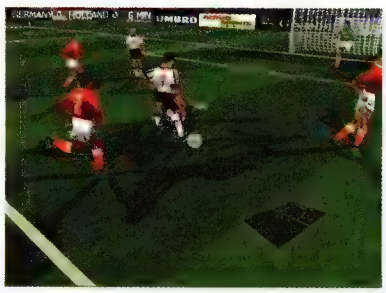
WIN! Exclusive Signed Shearer Art!

As you may recall, issue 2 of STATION featured our exclusive review of *Actua Soccer 3* and a rather spiffing Alan Shearer cover. The original framed artwork could be yours signed by none other than Newcastle star Shearer. We must stress that this is a one off and is highly collectible.

Should you desire this piece of football/magazine history answer the question below and send your entries to the usual address marking them **'I LOVE ALAN, I DO.'**

QUESTION: NAME ANY TELEVISION ADVERT THAT ALAN SHEARER HAS APPEARED IN.

TIE BREAKER: "I THINK ALAN SHEARER SHOULD ADVERTISE ... ... BECAUSE ... ..."



TITLE: YO YO'S PARK
PUBLISHER: JVC
RELEASE: 2ND QTR '99

Billed as a cross between *Bubble Bobble* and *Bomberman*, JVC is hoping that this will attain the same status as its former release *Mr Domino*. The brightly coloured screens and rapid sonic activity we've seen so far suggest that this could be one of JVC most playable titles to date. The odd screen tilt should make more queasy gamers spew profusely but we've got fingers crossed that it will be the ideal game for the after-the-pub gameplay session. We should have a review in the next couple of issues.

TITLE: POY POY 2
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
RELEASE: TBA

Very similar to the first *Poy Poy* title, this new version of the game, currently being developed, features the usual addictive gameplay. For those who aren't familiar, this beat 'em-up basically consists of picking up objects (and sometime the opposing characters) and then throwing them accurately enough to cause pain. It's the trademark wackyness we've come to expect from Japanese games and fortunately, it passes the playability test with flying colours, chairs, benches, people, sandbags, trees and so on.

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TECH BITS

SHOCKHAMMER

PRODUCED BY: ThrustMaster
PRICE: £24.99
RATING: Good and hard

It's a Dreamcast pad! Almost. Thrustmaster's peripherals are rarely bad, and this sturdy unit reeks of quality, the only reservation we have is that the analogue sticks are too stiff.

MULTIPLAYER ADAPTOR

PRODUCED BY: InterAct
PRICE: £19.99
RATING: Average

Looking at this reminds us of those office golf holes sold in Argos which pushed the ball back towards you. It's the same price as the official multitap, works just as well but you know the official looks better.

EXPLORER V2

PRODUCED BY: Blaze
PRICE: £29.99
RATING: Still the best

The new version of the Xplorer, with audio CD player capability, a smoother interface and all the new cheats for *Tekken 3* and *Colin McRae* etc. Datel's pricier Action Replay offering just doesn't compete.

TURBO PRO

PRODUCED BY: Max Play
PRICE: £9.99
RATING: Flimsy

A red pad with average controls and turbo buttons on the underside. Worth about a fiver we reckon. Possibly of use for button bashing games or simple beat 'em-ups.

BLASTER LIGHT GUN PRO

PRODUCED BY: JoyTech
PRICE: £24.99
RATING: Average

GunCon Compatible, force feedback, what else does a boy need? No batteries that's for sure. It's the most acceptable cheap offering we think, but Namco's GunCon is only a fiver more and slightly more accurate.

Namco And Square Dream Team

The new arcade beat 'em-up Ergheiz is a joint effort between Square's internal development team known as the Dream Factory – the collective that made the *Tobal* series of beat 'em-ups – and Namco. The CG intermissions between fights are among the best to be seen yet in an arcade game. The game is confirmed as PlayStation bound, and a demo has been offered as a bonus disc with recent Square releases. The character roster includes a bloke going by the name of Ken Mishima, a relative to best pals Heihachi and Kazuya, while a 29 year old English fighter with a floppy hairdo goes under the title of Prince Naseem. We kid you not!

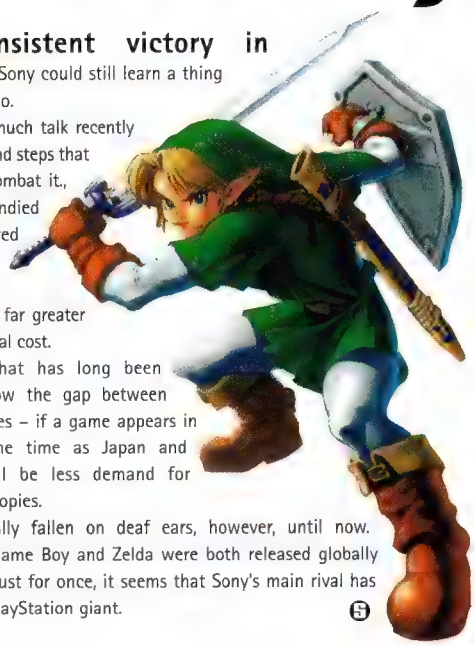
TOO BLOODY ROAR

Hudson's System 12-based based beat 'em-up has just been released in Japan. It's a sequel to the vicious animal led *Bloody Roar* or er, *Beastorizer* as it was called in the States. Using coin-op hardware similar to *Tekken 3* it will be interesting to see how the game compares to Namco's benchmark beat 'em-up. Virgin published the original game, but there has been no word on who will publish the follow-up title in the UK as of yet. The game retains most of the original characters but focuses more upon *Tekken* style combos rather than semi automatic 'chained' attacks.

Cyberorg Borg

Square has announced a promising sci fi game due from its Japanese headquarters entitled *Cyberorg*. Square has said it wished to fuse the beat 'em-up and shoot 'em-up into one. The Japanese market are heavily anticipating the game as it is in the vein of Sega's *Virtua On* arcade game which they go mad for, apparently.

Nintendo Leads The Way



Despite consistent victory in console war, Sony could still learn a thing or two from Nintendo.

There has been much talk recently of computer piracy and steps that could be taken to combat it., and ELSPA has bandied around six figured estimates of the cost to combat it. Others have mooted far greater figures in terms of real cost.

One solution that has long been advised is to narrow the gap between regional release dates – if a game appears in Europe at the same time as Japan and America, there will be less demand for imports and pirate copies.

This has generally fallen on deaf ears, however, until now. Nintendo's Colour Game Boy and Zelda were both released globally within two weeks. Just for once, it seems that Sony's main rival has the jump over the PlayStation giant.

Barbie Wired!

In a staggering $3.8 billion deal to acquire The Learning Company (TLC), Mattel has become second only to the mighty Microsoft in the global software market. Although their only real success previously in the world of software has been a Barbie CD-ROM, Mattel's new purchase will put them in control of TLC subsidiaries, notably Broderbund (*Myst, Riven* etc.) and the rights to brand names such as *Sesame Street* and the *National Geographic*.

The deal was brokered shortly before Christmas, and has massive implications for the future of gaming. Mattel have already stated that they look forward to exploiting the relationship between toys and games, and could lead other publishing houses to do the same. Although perhaps having more traditional relevance for PC users, TLCs interest in educational software could begin to filter through to the PSX. French developer Cryo Interactive has already begun work on their first educational PlayStation title, *Egypt* (see Unfinished Business).

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R4
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Namcos Jog Con for Playstation

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PlayStation

ASCII
IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

BIG JUGS & UGLY BUGS

The new year has brought in many changes, not least some new celebratory statements and groans of complaints.

The Jugs

- EA - It's good to talk.
- *Ridge Racer 4* - Speedy.
- Dave buying office Chrimbo albums. 'So here it is...'
- Rapide's alcohol fuelled Chrimbo party blitz. Apologies to to the Rougemont Hotel.
- White Lightning - oh, we love it.
- Ally Macbeal - or Calista Flockhart, to fans. Dribble.
- Furbies - lovely inhuman chitchat.
- Aliens - They are our special friends.
- TUFC - Gimme a T..., Gimme an O... etc.
- Those delightful Valley Girls from South West Water getting 'shirty'.

The Bugs

- Zoe Ball - stop now please.
- Dreamcast - oh, dear it's not that good.
- Darren's cream based eating habits.
- Dave buying office Christmas albums. 'And a partridge...'
- Australian surfwear - lack of.
- Hitting staff - we shouldn't do it.
- Darren's naughty post pub habits.
- *Sensible Soccer* - slow, crap and sad.
- Ex squeezes being a pain in the arse.

Gettin' Freaky With It

Following Abe's Exoddus being nominated for an oscar award, Abe has turned his talents towards the art of rap and made his musical debut with *Get Freaky!*, helping out a dodgy German pop collective. At the time of writing the single release was residing at number five in the German singles chart, and features game samples with some bird warbling over the top of the electro-esque tune urging you to er, 'Get Freaky'. The office verdict wasn't positive and most deemed the tune of the same standard of recent Christmas number one hopes such as Fat Les.

SONY IS WILD

The *Legend of Legaia*, a Japanese RPG by the same developers as *Wild Arms* has been translated into English and will be released in America during February. A UK release through Sony is likely, but we just hope it exceeds the very dated *Wild Arms* that arrived in the UK two years after its American debut. Sony should push for the speedy release of this title, we reckon.

Enhanced Pirates Cause Sony Nightmare

A US firm known as the Semiconductor Company have produced an cheat cartridge which plugs into the parallel port of your PlayStation. Nothing remarkable about this, you might think – but it also lets your PAL machine play import games and illegal pirated software. This comes as a major blow to Sony as potential pirate buyers don't have to run the risk of having their machines put under MOD chip open heart surgery or losing their guarantee.

The £25 device uses Action Replay codes and could have a devastating effect on the PlayStation software market. It's questionable how many of these cartridges will have been given as Christmas presents and what games would actually be supplied by third party retailers. The idea of a cartridge with *Metal Gear Solid*, *Tomb Raider III* and *Colin McRae* for around £40 is certain to strike the fear of God into both Sony and third party publishers.

A collection of PlayStation Mod Chips

EYE CANDY

Diesel Power

Psygnosis relatively rocky road of problems could be put on the straight and narrow with the arrival of *G-Police 2*. A technically superb *Colony Wars 2* and some mouth watering renders such as this sci fi apocolypse bode well. We just hope the internal development team are still on the ball... 5

Inside

PlayStation business news for the more discerning gamer

Inside Index: [page 126] Gran Turismo makes record – Computer games show scheduled [page 127] Cash boost for anti-piracy team – Sony gets wrist slapped – Jakarta spreads throughout the land

Gran Turismo Biggest Seller Ever

Gran Turismo takes a place in the record books for all-time greatest European sales. Despite only having been on sale since May, UK sales are already over half a million.

With over two million sales to date, the PlayStation's definitive racer, *Gran Turismo*, has secured a place in gaming history as the best selling PlayStation game ever in Europe. *Gran Turismo* has also seen huge successes elsewhere. The total world-wide count sales are already over five million copies, with over half a million *Gran Turismo* discs being sold in the UK alone. Sony is delighted with the news, especially as the game, which was released here on May 8th, has not even been out for a full year yet!

In December last year, retailers voted *Gran Turismo* the best selling console title for 1998. A spokesman for Sony said, 'It's been an incredible success story!'

Consumer Games Show Takes Shape

Could be time to get your wallets out for a few PlayStation bargains this summer as a new computer game event is planned.

A consumer game show is being planned by massive event company Miller Freeman, with London's Olympia during the bank holiday weekend of August 28th-30th being strongly tipped as the time and the place. Currently the idea is being mooted amongst game publishers world-wide, with a decision on whether to go ahead with it expected to be made by February. Watch out for further news in STATION come spring.

French Get Serious

The French finally get their hands in their pockets and throw some francs at software.

Always a little late at getting behind world trends, the French are currently experiencing a sales boom in consoles and CD-ROM. Last years sales of CD-ROMs and PlayStation games reached a new record height of 4.5 billion francs (£486 million). That's an astonishing 43% up on last year according to a new industry poll. This means that in 1999, the French market is on course to grow faster than average. This is partly due to dramatic falls in prices across the board last year.

Cash Boost To Heave-Ho Game Pirates

Last month's appeals for cash to fight piracy in computer games have been answered as the games industry decides to get tough.

Last month's appeals for cash to fight piracy in computer games have been answered as the games industry decides to get tough. Over £250,000 pounds has already been raised for the game industry's Crime Unit in a move to get much tougher with game pirates in 1999. The move was heavily supported by Sony after last months appeal for cash by the game publishers trade body the European Leisure Software Publishers Association. The problem of piracy is one that has been with the games industry for some time, but this latest series of donations will help ELSPAs Crime Unit to start to target the recent increase in internet piracy. 'We need to move quickly and decisively now to further restrict the activity of pirates. I can only hope that everyone understands the urgency of the situation', said ELSPA Chairman, Roger Bennet.

Sony Get Anti–Competition Slap

The European Commission's anti-competition directorate have made Sony modify the licensing agreements it has with its publishers and developers.

The EC has objected to Sony's licensing practices which it alleged were 'restrictive'. The Anti-Competition arm of the EC had raised serious concerns over Sony's requirement that third party developers should obtain its prior approval before developing titles for the platform. How Sony will modify existing agreements is not known, but it is known that both of its major competitors, Nintendo and Sega, were investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for similarly restrictive practices way back in 1994. Ex-Sega boss Garth Sumpter said 'Licensing agreements were known to be illegal. It's not unreasonable or before time that we should ask companies to work within European law.'

Nintendo and Sega both had to redraft similarly restrictive agreements following criticism, which were approved in July and August 1997 respectively.

Dixons @jakarta Stores Continue To Open

High Street retailer Dixons continues to open new @jakarta stores.

Two new @jakarta stores are expected this month as Dixons continues with its plan to open around 80 stores by the end of this year. The first @jakarta store was opened in November '98 and Dixons hope this will underline its move into high tech specialist high street shops. The launch of the shops also coincided with the Dixons free internet service Freeserve, which is already pushing market leader AOL out of its number one slot with 475,000 subscribers. The new shops are split roughly into two halves, selling PC stuff in one half and filling the rest of the shelves with everything PlayStation and console based. Keep your eyes opened for future shop openings as @jakarta comes to a town near you.

GT Buys Reflections

GT Interactive add another top developer to its already bursting stables.

GT Interactive have bought top development team Reflections – formerly linked to Psygnosis. The team responsible for both *Destruction Derby* games are working on their current project *Driver*. Harry Rubin, International President of GT Interactive said 'As we continue to grow our international market share, developers like Reflections, which can design products for Europe as well as those with broader global appeal, become vital to our success'. Reflections was equally chuffed with the corporate backslapping going on – Martin Edmindson said 'We are very pleased to be working with GT. We like the company and have great respect for their achievements in the industry'.

The Newcastle developers have been in business since 1984, creating the Amiga game *Shadow of The Beast* in the early nineties, and join Oddworld and Singltrac at GT.

Taking Control

MAX POWER RACING

If you're looking here then you've chosen to race on USA track 1 (Monaco track 3 is a rolling demo). Now you need to know how to drive your car around, so here's the list of controls. Watch out for that understeer, it's a killer.

CONTROLS

←	Steer Left
→	Steer Right
↑	Accelerate
○	Handbrake
↓	Brake/Reverse
SELECT	Change View
START	Pause
R2	Replace Car
L2/R1	Gears Up/Down

PLAYER MANAGER SEASON '98–'99

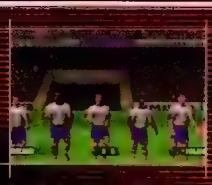
Inspired by the many PC footie management games out there, the arrow moves around with the direction of the pad. Like a mouse works. It's really that easy.

CONTROLS

←,→,↑,↓	Move the arrows around the screen
○	Select highlighted function

If you're going to play our demos, and we'd be upset if you didn't, then you'll need to know how to accelerate, shoot and change your squad (though not in the same game). There's also loads more, and here's how you do it.

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99



In a perfect example of how to make football games simple and yet realistically complicated, we come to the controls for this cracking little game. It takes a little while to get used to them, but you do, so stick with it.

CONTROLS

WITHOUT BALL		WITH BALL		⊗ then Square	
⊗	Slide tackle	■	Pass		Player will pass to team mate, who will perform a high return pass back for a volley/header.
●	Hook tackle/Header	▲	Kick/Lob		
▲	Chest ball (+D-pad)	●	Through ball	R1 + ⊗	Long Pass.
		✕	Shoot (Pull back D-pad for height)	R1 + Square	Automatic cross (from any position on the pitch).
R1	Sprint	R1	Sprint	Double tap ⊗	Player will attempt a chip.
L1	Select player	L1	Overhead view	Double tap L1	Player taps ball further in front of himself.

COMBOS		SKILL (Hold R1 and then)	
Double tap of ⊗	Player will perform one-two with team mate.	Hold ▲	Player performs shimmy over the ball.
⊗ then ● and direction	Player will pass ball to team mate, who then passes on first time.	Hold ▲ & press ←	Player drags ball left.
		Hold ▲ & press →	Player drags ball right.
		Hold ▲ & press Back	Player drags ball back.
		Hold ▲ & press Forward	Player spins with ball.

SHADOW GUNNER

Nothing too complicated to deal with here. It's the first level of the game and the mission objective is to destroy everything.

CONTROLS

↑	Forward
↓	Backward
←	Left
→	Right
●	Shoulder Weapon
⊗	Hand Weapon
■	Swipe at the Enemy
L1 / R1	Side-step Left/Right
R2	Select Target to Lock
L2	Hold to Target

S.C.A.R.S

Keep your eyes on the road as you speed around, but also watch out for those weapon pick-ups, and use them at the right time to make your passage to the top spot that little bit easier.

CONTROLS

←	Steer Left
→	Steer Right
⊗	Accelerate
●	Turn Lights On / Off
■	Brake
▲	Change View
L1	Jump
L2	Rear View
R1	Fire Weapon

CHARTS AND PRICE WATCH

Determined to save the pennies in your pocket, here's our usual breakdown of this month's movers and shakers in the PlayStation market. Not only do we bring you a full chart listing from all around the industry, but also let you know where the bargains are to be had.

CHART TRACK	
1. FIFA '99	EA
2. TOMB RAIDER III	Eidos
3. SPYRO THE DRAGON	Sony
4. ABE'S EXODDUS	GT
5. TEKKEN 3	Namco/Sony
6. TOCA (PLAT.)	Codemasters
7. TOCA 2	Codemasters
8. F1 '98	Psygnosis
9. CRASH BANDICOOT (PLAT.)	Sony
10. V RALLY	Infogrames

BLOCKBUSTER RENTAL	
1. FIFA '99	EA
2. TOCA 2	Codemasters
3. TOMB RAIDER III	Eidos
4. CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED	Sony
5. ABE'S EXODDUS	GT Interactive
6. COOL BOARDERS 3	Sony
7. TENCHU	Activision
8. ACTUA SOCCER 3	Gremlin
9. SMALL SOLDIERS	EA
10. APOCALYPSE	Activision

INDEPENDENT	
1. TOMB RAIDER III	Eidos
2. TEKKEN 2 (PLAT.)	Sony
3. BRIAN LARA CRICKET	Codemasters
4. FIFA '99	EA
5. KNOCKOUT KINGS	EA
6. TOMB RAIDER (PLAT.)	Eidos
7. ABE'S EXODDUS	GT
8. APOCALYPSE	Activision
9. CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED	Sony
10. ABE'S ODDYSEE (PLAT.)	GT Interactive

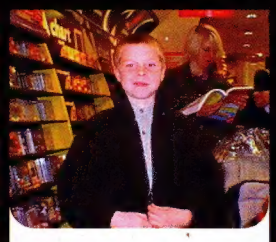
GAME	
1. TOMB RAIDER III	Eidos
2. FIFA '99	EA
3. CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED	Sony
4. TOCA 2	Codemasters
5. KNOCKOUT KINGS	EA
6. BRIAN LARA CRICKET	Codemasters
7. ABE'S EXODDUS	GT Interactive
8. GRAN TURISMO	Sony
9. SPYRO THE DRAGON	Sony
10. MUSIC	Codemasters

PRICE WATCH	INDEPENDENT	GAMEPLAY MAIL ORDER	HMV	TOY 'R' US
FIFA '99 – EA	£39.99	£32.99	£39.99	£39.97
TOMB RAIDER III – Eidos	£44.99	£34.99	£44.99	£44.97
SPYRO – Sony	£29.99	£34.99	£39.99	£39.97
ABE'S EXODDUS – GT Interactive	£44.99	£32.99	£39.99	£39.97
TEKKEN 3 – Sony	£39.99	£35.99	£44.99	£44.97

CONSUMER WATCH

Every month we visit the high street and talk to gamesplayers about what they are buying now, and what they will be looking out for over the next few months. The usual cross section features here, but you'll have to forgive Luke, as he'd only bought his PSX the day before...

NAME: Jane Hutchins
AGE: 33
OCCUPATION: Radio Operator
YOUR PURCHASE: *TOCA 2*
BUYING NEXT: *FIFA '99*
MOST WANTED: *Tomb Raider III*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *Tomb Raider II*
WORST PSX TITLE: *All golf sims*



NAME: Jamie
AGE: 10
OCCUPATION: School
YOUR PURCHASE: *Brian Lara*
BUYING NEXT: *F1 '98*
MOST WANTED: *F1 '98*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *Future Cop*
WORST PSX TITLE: *Love's 'em all!*

NAME: Chris Pomeroy
AGE: 18
OCCUPATION: Student
YOUR PURCHASE: *Tomb Raider III*
BUYING NEXT: *Undecided*
MOST WANTED: *Metal Gear Solid*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *Tomb Raider*
WORST PSX TITLE: *Extreme Pinball*

NAME: Luke Tanton
AGE: 18
OCCUPATION: Unemployed
YOUR PURCHASE: *Power Soccer 2*
BUYING NEXT: *Undecided*
MOST WANTED: *FIFA '99*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *N/A*
WORST PSX TITLE: *N/A*

NAME: Tom Scobie
AGE: 16
OCCUPATION: Student
YOUR PURCHASE: *Resident Evil 2*
BUYING NEXT: *Sim City 3000 (PC)*
MOST WANTED: *C&C: Tiberian Sun*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *Tomb Raider III*
WORST PSX TITLE: *Ridge Racer*

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